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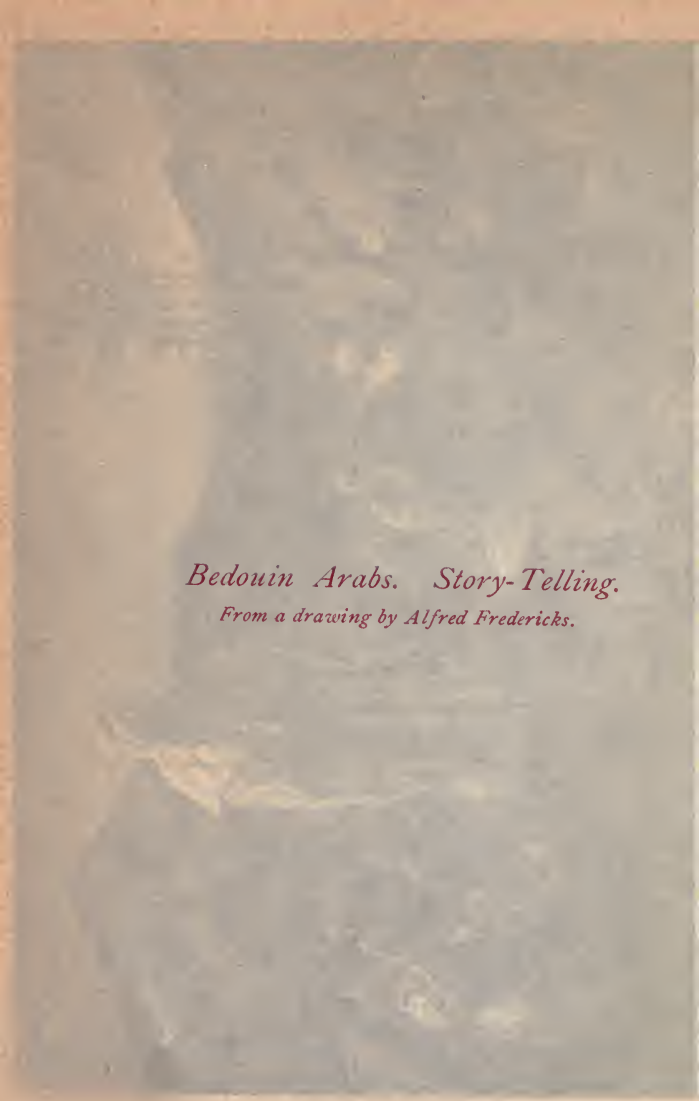
Author's Autograph Edition

MAHOMET AND HIS SUCCESSORS & SPANISH LEGENDS

BY WASHINGTON IRVING

NEW YORK & LONDON
G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
1907

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA



Bedouin Arabs. Story-Telling.
From a drawing by Alfred Fredericks.

Author's Autograph Edition

MAHOMET AND HIS SUCCESSORS & SPANISH LEGENDS

BY WASHINGTON IRVING

Volume III.

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Mahomet and his Successors

AUTHOR'S AUTOGRAPH EDITION

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Mahomet and his Successors

MAHOMET AND HIS SUCCESSORS.

Chapter I.

Preparations of Ali for the Invasion of Syria—His Assassination.

THE loss of Egypt was a severe blow to the fortunes of Ali, and he had the mortification subsequently to behold his active rival make himself master of Hejaz, plant his standard on the sacred cities of Mecca and Medina, and ravage the fertile province of Yemen. The decline of his power affected his spirits, and he sank at times into despondency. His melancholy was aggravated by the conduct of his own brother Okail, who, under pretence that Ali did not maintain him in suitable style, deserted him in his sinking fortunes, and went over to Moawyah, who rewarded his unnatural desertion with ample revenues.

Still Ali meditated one more grand effort. Sixty thousand devoted adherents pledged themselves to stand by him to the death, and with these he prepared to march into Syria. While preparations were going on, it chanced that three zealots, of the sect of Karigites, met as pilgrims in the mosque of Mecca, and fell into conversation about the battle of Naharwân, wherein four thousand of their brethren had lost their lives. This led to lamentations over the dissensions and dismemberment of the Moslem empire, all which they attributed to the ambition of Ali, Moawyah, and Amru. The Karigites were a fanatic sect, and these men were zealots of that dangerous kind who are ready to sacrifice their lives in the accomplishment of any bigot plan. In their infuriate zeal they determined that the only way to restore peace and unity to Islam, would be to destroy those three ambitious leaders, and they devoted themselves to the task, each undertaking to despatch his victim. The several assassinations were to be effected at the same time, on Friday, the seventeenth of the month Ramadan, at the hour of prayer; and that their blows might be infallibly mortal, they were to use poisoned weapons.

The names of the conspirators were Barak Ibn Abdallah, Amru Ibn Asi, and Abda'lrah-

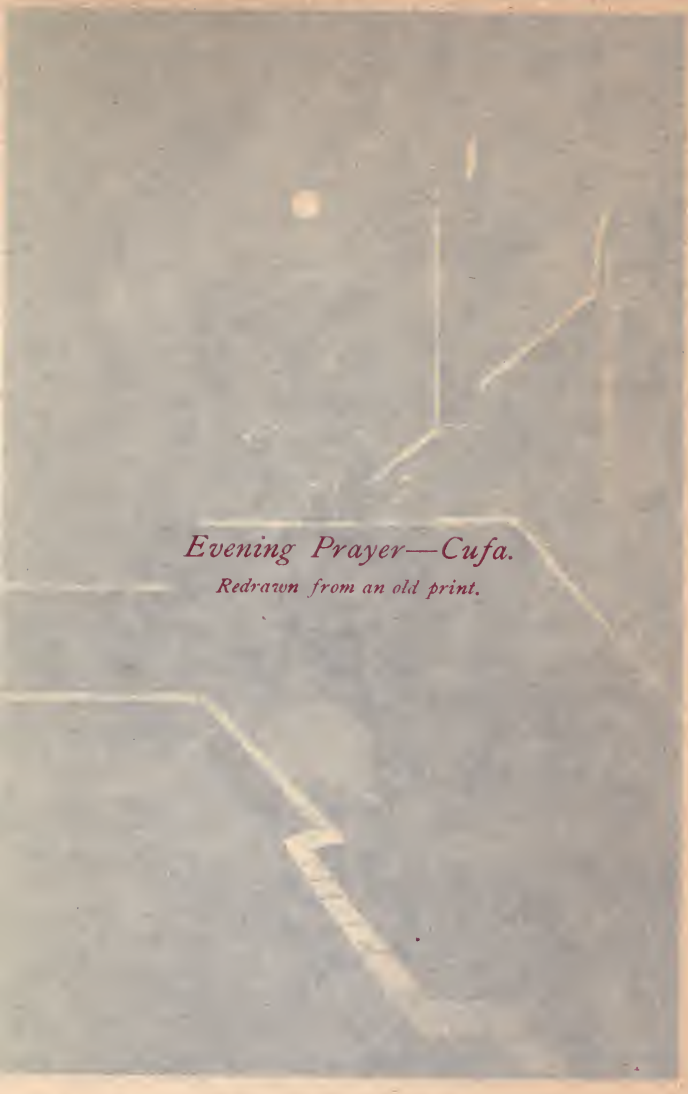
man Ibn Melgem. Barak repaired to Damascus and mingled in the retinue of Moawyah on the day appointed, which was the Moslem Sabbath; then, as the usurper was officiating in the mosque as pontiff, Barak gave him what he considered a fatal blow. The wound was desperate, but the life of Moawyah was saved by desperate remedies; the assassin was mutilated of hands and feet and suffered to live; but was slain in after years by a friend of Moawyah.

Amru Ibn Asi, the second of these fanatics, entered the mosque in Egypt on the same day and hour, and with one blow killed Karijah the Imam, who officiated, imagining him to be Amru Ibn al Aass, who was prevented from attending the mosque through illness. The assassin being led before his intended victim, and informed of his error, replied with the resignation of a predestinarian: "I intended Amru; but Allah intended Karijah." He was presently executed.

Abda'lrahman, the third assassin, repaired to Cufa, where Ali held his court. Here he lodged with a woman of the sect of the Karigites, whose husband had been killed in the battle of Neharwân. To this woman he made proposals of marriage, but she replied she would have no man who would not bring her, as a

dowry, three thousand drachms of silver, a slave, a maid-servant, and the head of Ali. He accepted the conditions, and joined two other Karigites, called Derwan and Shabib, with him in the enterprise. They stationed themselves in the mosque to await the coming of the Caliph.

Ali had recently been afflicted with one of his fits of despondency, and had uttered ejaculations which were afterwards considered presages of his impending fate. In one of his melancholy moods he exclaimed with a heavy sigh, "Alas, my heart! there is need of patience, for there is no remedy against death!" In parting from his house to go to the mosque, there was a clamor among his domestic fowls, which he interpreted into a fatal omen. As he entered the mosque, the assassins drew their swords and pretended to be fighting among themselves; Derwan aimed a blow at the Caliph, but it fell short, and struck the gate of the mosque; a blow from Abda'lrahman was better aimed, and wounded Ali in the head. The assassins then separated and fled. Derwan was pursued and slain at the threshold of his home. Shabib distanced his pursuers and escaped. Abda'lrahman, after some search, was discovered hidden in a corner of the mosque, his sword still in his hand. He was



Evening Prayer—Cufa.

Redrawn from an old print.

[illegible] three thousand devotees of other, a [illegible] and [illegible] Ali. He [illegible] the [illegible], and joined [illegible] Derwan and Shahib, with him [illegible]. They stationed themselves [illegible] the mosque to await the coming of the [illegible].

Ali had recently been afflicted with one of his fits of despondency, and had uttered [illegible] which were afterwards considered [illegible] of his impending fate. In one of [illegible] moods he exclaimed with a [illegible] sigh, "Alas, my heart! there is need [illegible], for there is no remedy against [illegible]." [illegible] to go to the [illegible] his domestic [illegible], which he interpreted into a fatal [illegible]. As he entered the mosque, the assassins drew their swords and pretended to be fighting [illegible]; Derwan aimed a blow at the [illegible], but it fell short, and struck the gate of the mosque; a blow from Abdu'lrahman was better aimed, and wounded Ali in the head. The assassins then separated and fled. Derwan was pursued and slain at the threshold of his home. Shahib distanced his pursuers and escaped. Abdu'lrahman, after some search, was discovered hidden in a corner of the [illegible], his sword still in his hand. He was

dragged forth and brought before the Caliph. The wound of Ali was pronounced mortal; he consigned his murderer to the custody of his son Hassan, adding with his accustomed clemency, "Let him want for nothing; and, if I die of my wound, let him not be tortured; let his death be by a single blow." His orders, according to the Persian writers, were strictly complied with, but the Arabians declare that he was killed by piecemeal; and the Moslems opposed to the sect of Ali hold him up as a martyr.

The death of Ali happened within three days after receiving his wound: it was in the fortieth year of the Hegira, A.D. 660. He was about sixty-three years of age, of which he had reigned not quite five. His remains were interred about five miles from Cufa; and, in after times, a magnificent tomb, covered by a mosque, with a splendid dome, rose over his grave, and it became the site of a city called Meshed Ali, or, the Sepulchre of Ali, and was enriched and beautified by many Persian monarchs.

We make no concluding comments on the noble and generous character of Ali which has been sufficiently illustrated throughout all the recorded circumstances of his life. He was one of the last and worthiest of the primi-

tive Moslems, who imbibed his religious enthusiasm from companionship with the prophet himself; and who followed, to the last, the simplicity of his example. He is honorably spoken of as the first Caliph who accorded some protection to Belles-Lettres. He indulged in the poetic vein himself, and many of his maxims and proverbs are preserved, and have been translated into various languages. His signet bore this inscription: "The kingdom belongs to God." One of his sayings shows the little value he set upon the transitory glories of this world. "Life is but the shadow of a cloud: the dream of a sleeper."

By his first wife, Fatima, the daughter of Mahomet, he had three sons: Mohassan, who died young, and Hassan, and Hosein, who survived him. After her death he had eight other wives, and his issue, in all, amounted to fifteen sons and eighteen daughters. His descendants, by Fatima, are distinguished among Moslems as descendants of the prophet, and are very numerous, being reckoned both by the male and female line. They wear turbans of a peculiar fashion, and twist their hair in a different manner from other Moslems. They are considered of noble blood, and designated in different countries by various titles,

such as Sheriffs, Fatimites, and Emirs. The Persians venerate Ali as next to the prophet and solemnize the anniversary of his martyrdom. The Turks hold him in abhorrence, and for a long time, in their prayers, accompanied his name with execrations; but subsequently abated in their violence. It is said that Ali was born in the Caaba, or holy temple of Mecca, where his mother was suddenly taken in labor, and that he was the only person of such distinguished birth.

Chapter II.

Succession of Hassan, Fifth Caliph—He Abdicates in Favor of Moawyah.

IN his dying moments Ali had refused to nominate a successor, but his eldest son Hassan, then in his 37th year, was elected without opposition. He stood high in the favor of the people, partly from his having been a favorite with his grandfather, the prophet, to whom in his features he bore a strong resemblance; but chiefly from the moral excellence of his character, for he was upright, sincere, benevolent, and devout. He lacked, however, the energy and courage necessary to a sovereignty, where the sceptre was a sword; and he was unfitted to command in the civil wars which distracted the empire, for he had a horror of shedding Moslem blood. He made a funeral speech over his father's remains, showing that his death was coincident with great and solemn events. "He

was slain," said he, "on the same night of the year in which the Koran was transmitted to earth; in which Isa (Jesus) was taken up to heaven, and in which Joshua, the son of Nun, was killed. By Allah! none of his predecessors surpassed him, nor will he ever be equalled by a successor."

Then Kais, a trusty friend of the house of Ali, commenced the inauguration of the new Caliph. "Stretch forth thy hand," said he to Hassan, "in pledge that thou wilt stand by the book of God, and the tradition of the apostle, and make war against all opposers." Hassan complied with the ceremonial, and was proclaimed Caliph, and the people were called upon to acknowledge allegiance to him, and engage to maintain peace with his friends, and war with his enemies. Some of the people, however, with the characteristic fickleness of Babylonians, murmured at the suggestion of further warfare, and said, we want no fighting Caliph.

Had Hassan consulted his own inclination, he would willingly have clung to peace, and submitted to the usurpations of Moawyah; but he was surrounded by valiant generals eager for action, and stimulated by his brother Hosein, who inherited the daring character of their father; beside, there were sixty thou-

sand fighting men, all ready for the field, and who had been on the point of marching into Syria under Ali. Unwillingly, therefore, he put himself at the head of this force and commenced his march. Receiving intelligence that Moawyah had already taken the field and was advancing to meet him, he sent Kais in the advance, with 12,000 light troops, to hold the enemy in check, while he followed with the main army. Kais executed his commission with spirit, had a smart skirmish with the Syrians, and having checked them in their advance, halted and put himself in a position to await the coming of the Caliph.

Hassan, however, had already become sensible of his incompetency to military command. There was disaffection among some of his troops, who were people of Irak or Babylonia, disinclined to this war. On reaching the city of Madayn, an affray took place among the soldiers, in which one was slain; a fierce tumult succeeded; Hassan attempted to interfere, but was jostled and wounded in the throng, and obliged to retire into the citadel. He had taken refuge from violence, and was in danger of treason, for the nephew of the governor of Madayn proposed to his uncle, now that he had Hassan within his castle, to make him his prisoner, and send him in chains

to Moawyah. "A curse upon thee for a traitor and an infidel!" cried the honest old governor; "wouldst thou betray the son of the daughter of the Apostle of God?"

The mild-tempered Caliph, who had no ambition of command, was already disheartened by its troubles. He saw that he had an active and powerful enemy to contend with, and fickleness and treachery among his own people; he sent proposals to Moawyah, offering to resign the caliphate to him, on condition that he should be allowed to retain the money in the public treasury at Cufa, and the revenues of a great estate in Persia, and that Moawyah would desist from all evil-speaking against his deceased father. Moawyah assented to the two former of these stipulations; but would only consent to refrain from speaking evil of Ali in presence of Hassan; and indeed, such was the sectarian hatred already engendered against Ali, that, under the sway of Moawyah, his name was never mentioned in the mosques without a curse, and such continued to be the case for several generations under the dominion of the house of Ommiah.

Another condition exacted by Hassan, and which ultimately proved fatal to him, was that he should be entitled to resume the caliphate on the death of Moawyah, who was above a

score of years his senior. These terms being satisfactorily adjusted, Hassan abdicated in favor of Moawyah, to the great indignation of his brother Hosein, who considered the memory of their father Ali dishonored by this arrangement. The people of Cufa refused to comply with that condition relative to the public treasury; insisting upon it that it was their property. Moawyah, however, allowed Hassan an immense revenue, with which he retired with his brother to Medina, to enjoy that ease and tranquillity which he so much prized. His life was exemplary and devout, and the greater part of his revenue was expended in acts of charity.

Moawyah seems to have been well aware of the power of gold in making the most distasteful things palatable. An old beldame of the lineage of Haschem, and branch of Ali, once reproached him with having supplanted that family, who were his cousins, and with having acted toward them as Pharaoh did toward the children of Israel. Moawyah gently replied, "May Allah pardon what is past," and inquired what were her wants. She said two thousand pieces of gold for her poor relations, two thousand as a dower for her children, and two thousand as a support for herself. The money was given instantly, and the tongue of the clamorous virago was silenced.

Chapter III.

Reign of Moawyah I., Sixth Caliph—Account of his Illegitimate Brother, Ziyad—Death of Amru.

MOAWYAH now, in the forty-first year of the Hegira, assumed legitimate dominion over the whole Moslem empire. The Karigites, it is true, a fanatic sect opposed to all regular government, spiritual or temporal, excited an insurrection in Syria, but Moawyah treated them with more thorough rigor than his predecessors, and finding the Syrians not sufficient to cope with them, called in his new subjects, the Babylonians, to show their allegiance by rooting out this pestilent sect; nor did he stay his hand, until they were almost exterminated.

With this Caliph commenced the famous dynasty of the Ommiades or Omeyades, so called from Ommiah his great-grandfather; a dynasty which lasted for many generations, and gave some of the most brilliant names to

Arabian history. Moawyah himself gave indications of intellectual refinement. He surrounded himself with men distinguished in science or gifted with poetic talent, and from the Greek provinces and islands which he had subdued, the Greek sciences began to make their way, and under his protection to exert their first influence on the Arabs.

One of the measures adopted by Moawyah to strengthen himself in the caliphate excited great sensation, and merits particular detail. At the time of the celebrated flight of Mahomet, Abu Sofian, father of Moawyah, at that time chief of the tribe of Koreish, and as yet an inveterate persecutor of the prophet, halted one day for refreshment at the house of a publican in Tayef. Here he became intoxicated with wine, and passed the night in the arms of the wife of a Greek slave, named Somyah, who in process of time made him the father of a male child. Abu Sofian, ashamed of this amour, would not acknowledge the child, but left him to his fate; hence he received the name of Ziyad Ibn Abihi, that is to say, Ziyad the son of nobody.

The boy thus deserted, gave early proof of energy and talent. When scarce arrived at manhood, he surprised Amru Ibn al Aass, by his eloquence and spirit in addressing a popu-

lar assembly. Amru, himself illegitimate, felt a sympathy in the vigor of this spurious offset. "By the prophet!" exclaimed he, "if this youth were but of the noble race of Koreish, he would drive all the tribes of Arabia before him with his staff!"

Ziyad was appointed cadi or judge, in the reign of Omar, and was distinguished by his decisions. On one occasion, certain witnesses came before him accusing Mogeirah Ibn Seid, a distinguished person of unblemished character, with incontinence, but failed to establish the charge; whereupon, Ziyad dismissed the accused with honor, and caused his accusers to be scourged with rods for bearing false witness. This act was never forgotten by Mogeirah, who, becoming afterwards one of the counsellors of the Caliph Ali, induced him to appoint Ziyad lieutenant or governor of Persia, an arduous post of high trust, the duties of which he discharged with great ability.

After the death of Ali and the abdication of Hassan, events which followed hard upon each other, Ziyad, who still held sway over Persia, hesitated to acknowledge Moawyah as Caliph. The latter was alarmed at this show of opposition, fearing lest Ziyad should join with the family of Haschem, the kindred of the prophet, who desired the elevation of Hosein; he, there-

fore, sent for Mogeirah, the former patron of Ziyad, and prevailed upon him to mediate between them. Mogeirah repaired to Ziyad in person, bearing a letter of kindness and invitation from the Caliph, and prevailed on him to accompany him to Cufa. On their arrival Moawyah embraced Ziyad, and received him with public demonstrations of respect and affection, as his brother by the father's side. The fact of their consanguinity was established on the following day, in full assembly, by the publican of Tayef, who bore testimony to the intercourse between Abu Sofian and the beautiful slave.

This decision, enforced by the high hand of authority, elevated Ziyad to the noblest blood of Koreish, and made him eligible to the highest offices ; though in fact, the strict letter of the Mahometan law would have pronounced him the son of the Greek slave, who was husband of his mother.

The family of the Ommiades were indignant at having the base-born offspring of a slave thus introduced among them ; but Moawyah disregarded these murmurs ; he had probably gratified his own feelings of natural affection, and he had firmly attached to his interest, a man of extensive influence, and one of the ablest generals of the age.

Moawyah found good service in his valiant, though misbegotten brother. Under the sway of incompetent governors the country round Bassora had become overrun with thieves and murderers, and disturbed by all kinds of tumults. Ziyad was put in command, and hastened to take possession of his turbulent post. He found Bassora a complete den of assassins; not a night but was disgraced by riot and bloodshed, so that it was unsafe to walk the streets after dark. Ziyad was an eloquent man, and he made a public speech terribly to the point. He gave notice that he meant to rule with the sword, and to wreak unsparing punishment on all offenders; he advised all such, therefore, to leave the city. He warned all persons from appearing in public after evening prayers, as a patrol would go the rounds and put every one to death who should be found in the streets. He carried this measure into effect. Two hundred persons were put to death by the patrol during the first night, only five during the second, and not a drop of blood was shed afterwards, nor was there any further tumult or disturbance.

Moawyah then employed him to effect the same reforms in Khorassan and many other provinces, and the more he had to execute, the more was his ability evinced; until his

mere name would quell commotion, and awe the most turbulent into quietude. Yet he was not sanguinary nor cruel, but severely rigid in his discipline, and inflexible in the dispensation of justice. It was his custom, wherever he held sway, to order the inhabitants to leave their doors open at night, with merely a hurdle at the entrance to exclude cattle, engaging to replace anything that should be stolen ; and so effective was his police, that no robberies were committed.

Though Ziyad had whole provinces under his government, he felt himself not sufficiently employed ; he wrote to the Caliph, therefore, complaining that, while his left hand was occupied in governing Babylonia, his right hand was idle ; and he requested the government of Arabia Petrea also, which the Caliph gladly granted him, to the great terror of its inhabitants, who dreaded so stern a ruler. But the sand of Ziyad was exhausted. He was attacked with the plague when on the point of setting out for Arabia. The disease made its appearance with an ulcer in his hand, and the agony made him deliberate whether to smite it off. As it was a case of conscience among predestinarians, he consulted a venerable cadi.

"If you die," said the old expounder of the law, "you go before God without that hand,

which you have cut off to avoid appearing in his presence. If you live, you give a by-name to your children, who will be called the sons of the cripple. I advise you, therefore, to let it alone." The intensity of the pain, however, made him determine on amputation, but the sight of the fire and cauterizing irons again deterred him. He was surrounded by the most expert physicians, but, say the Arabians, "It was not in their power to reverse the sealed decree." He died in the forty-fifth year of the Hegira and of his own age, and the people he had governed with so much severity, considered his death a deliverance. His son Obeidallah, though only twenty-five years of age, was immediately invested by the Caliph with the government of Khorassan, and gave instant proofs of inheriting the spirit of his father. On his way to his government he surprised a large Turkish force, and put them to such sudden flight, that their queen left one of her buskins behind, which fell into the hands of her pursuers, and was estimated, from the richness of its jewels, at two thousand pieces of gold.

Ziyad left another son named Salem, who was, several years afterwards, when but twenty-four years of age, appointed to the government of Khorassan, and rendered himself so beloved by the people, that upwards of twenty thou-

sand children were named after him. He had a third son called Kameil, who was distinguished for sagacity and ready wit, and he furthermore left from his progeny a dynasty of princes in Arabia Felix, who ruled under the denomination of the children of Ziyad.

The wise measures of Moawyah produced a calm throughout his empire, although his throne seemed to be elevated on the surface of a volcano. He had reinstated the famous Amru Ibn al Aass in the government of Egypt, allowing him to enjoy the revenues of that opulent province, in gratitude for his having proclaimed him Caliph during his contest with Ali; but stipulating that he should maintain the forces stationed there. The veteran general did not long enjoy this post, as he died in the forty-third year of the Hegira, A. D. 663, as full of honors as of years. In him the cause of Islam lost one of its wisest men and most illustrious conquerors. "Show me," said Omar to him on one occasion, "the sword with which you have fought so many battles and slain so many infidels." The Caliph expressed surprise when he unsheathed an ordinary scimetar. "Alas!" said Amru, "the sword without the arm of the master, is no sharper nor heavier than the sword of Farezdak the poet."

Mahomet, whose death preceded that of Amru upwards of thirty years, declared that there was no truer Moslem than he would prove to be; nor one more steadfast in the faith. Although Amru passed most of his life in the exercise of arms, he found time to cultivate the softer arts which belong to peace. We have already shown that he was an orator and a poet. The witty lampoons, however, which he wrote against the prophet in his youth, he deeply regretted in his declining age. He sought the company of men of learning and science, and delighted in the conversation of philosophers. He has left some proverbs distinguished for pithy wisdom, and some beautiful poetry, and his dying advice to his children was celebrated for manly sense and affecting pathos.

Chapter IV.

Siege of Constantinople—Truce with the Emperor—Murder of Hassan—Death of Ayesha.

THE Caliph Moawyah being thoroughly established in his sovereignty was ambitious of foreign conquests, which might shed lustre on his name, and obliterate the memory of these civil wars. He was desirous, also, of placing his son Yezid in a conspicuous light, and gaining for him the affections of the people; for he secretly entertained hopes of making him his successor. He determined, therefore, to send him with a great force to attempt the conquest of Constantinople, at that time the capital of the Greek and Roman empire. This indeed was a kind of holy war, for it was fulfilling one of the most ardent wishes of Mahomet, who had looked forward to the conquest of the proud capital of the Cæsars as one of the highest triumphs of Islam, and had promised full par-

don of all their sins to the Moslem army that should achieve it.

The general command of the army in this expedition was given to a veteran named Sophian, and he was accompanied by several of those old soldiers of the faith, battered in the wars, and almost broken down by years, who had fought by the side of the prophet at Beder and Ohod, and were, therefore, honored by the title of "Companions," and who now showed, among the ashes of age, the sparks of youthful fire, as they girded on their swords for this sacred enterprise.

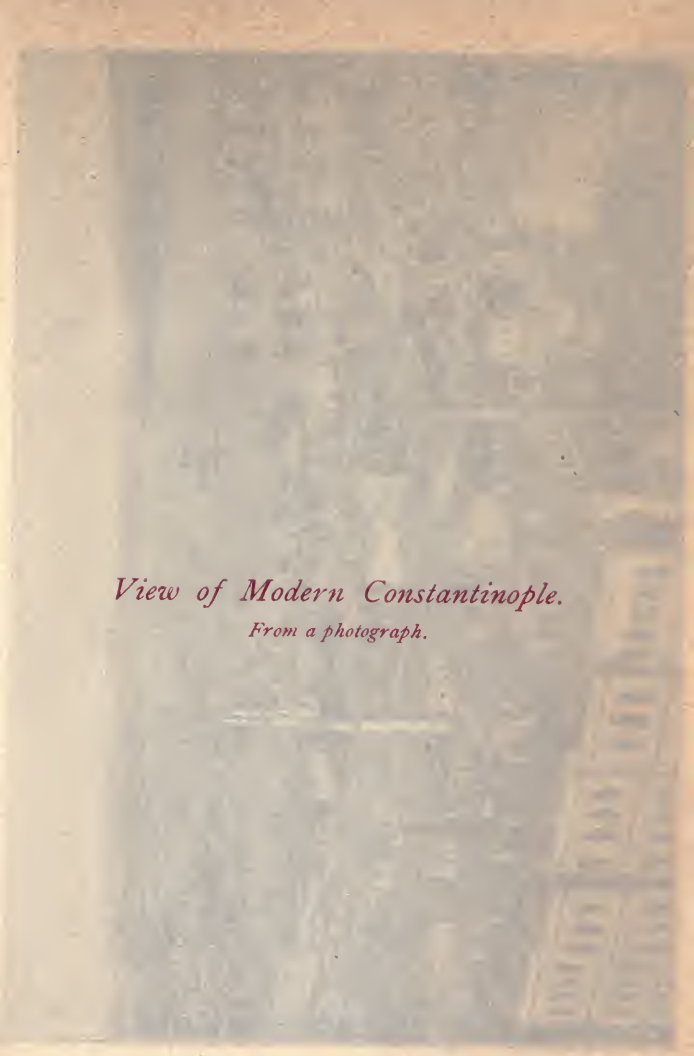
Hosein, the valiant son of Ali, also accompanied this expedition; in which, in fact, the flower of Moslem chivalry engaged. Great preparations were made by sea and land, and sanguine hopes entertained of success; the Moslem troops were numerous and hardy, inured to toil and practised in warfare, and they were animated by the certainty of paradise, should they be victorious. The Greeks, on the other hand, were in a state of military decline, and their emperor, Constantine, a grandson of Heraclius, disgraced his illustrious name by indolence and incapacity.

It is singular and to be lamented, that of this momentous expedition we have very few particulars, notwithstanding that it lasted long,

and must have been checkered by striking vicissitudes. The Moslem fleet passed without impediment through the Dardanelles, and the army disembarked within seven miles of Constantinople. For many days they pressed the siege with vigor, but the city was strongly garrisoned by fugitive troops from various quarters, who had profited by sad experience in the defence of fortified towns; the walls were strong and high; and the besieged made use of Greek fire, to the Moslems a new and terrific agent of destruction.

Finding all their efforts in vain, the Moslems consoled themselves by ravaging the neighboring coasts of Europe and Asia, and on the approach of winter retired to the island of Cyzicus, about eighty miles from Constantinople, where they had established their headquarters.

Six years were passed in this unavailing enterprise; immense sums were expended; thousands of lives were lost by disease; ships and crews, by shipwreck and other disasters, and thousands of Moslems were slain, gallantly fighting for paradise under the walls of Constantinople. The most renowned of these was the venerable Abu Ayub, in whose house Mahomet had established his quarters when he first fled to Medina, and who had fought by



View of Modern Constantinople.

From a photograph.

the side of the prophet at Beder and Ohod. He won an honored grave; for though it remained for ages unknown, yet nearly eight centuries after this event, when Constantinople was conquered by Mahomet II., the spot was revealed in a miraculous vision, and consecrated by a mausoleum and mosque, which exist to this day, and to which the grand seignors of the Ottoman empire repair to be belted with the scimetar on their accession to the throne.

The protracted war with the Greeks revived their military ardor, and they assailed the Moslems in their turn. Moawyah found the war which he had provoked threatening his own security. Other enemies were pressing on him; age, also, had sapped his bodily and mental vigor, and he became so anxious for safety and repose that he in a manner purchased a truce of the emperor for thirty years, by agreeing to pay an annual tribute of three thousand pieces of gold, fifty slaves, and fifty horses of the noblest Arabian blood.

Yezid, the eldest son of Moawyah, and his secretly-intended successor, had failed to establish a renown in this enterprise, and if Arabian historians speak true, his ambition led him to a perfidious act sufficient to stamp his name with infamy. He is accused of in-

stigating the murder of the virtuous Hassan, the son of Ali, who had abdicated in favor of Moawyah, but who was to resume the caliphate on the death of that potentate. It is questionable whether Hassan would ever have claimed this right, for he was of quiet, retired habits, and preferred the security and repose of a private station. He was strong, however, in the affection of the people; and to remove out of the way so dangerous a rival, Yezid, it is said, prevailed upon one of his wives to poison him, promising to marry her in reward of her treason. The murder took place in the forty-ninth year of the Hegira, A. D. 669, when Hassan was forty-seven years of age. In his last agonies, his brother Hosein inquired at whose instigation he supposed himself to have been poisoned, that he might avenge his death, but he refused to name him. "This world," said he, "is only a long night; leave him until he and I shall meet in open daylight, in the presence of the Most High."

Yezid refused to fulfil his promise of taking the murderess to wife, alleging that it would be madness to intrust himself to the embraces of such a female; he, however, commuted the engagement for a large amount in money and jewels. Moawyah is accused of either countenancing or being pleased with a murder

which made his son more eligible to the succession, for it is said that when he heard of the death of Hassan, "he fell down and worshipped."

Hassan had been somewhat uxorious; or rather, he had numerous wives, and was prone to change them when attracted by new beauties. One of them was the daughter of Yezdegird, the last king of the Persians, and she bore him several children. He had, altogether, fifteen sons and five daughters, and contributed greatly to increase the race of Sheriffs, or Fatimites, descendants from the prophet. In his testament he left directions that he should be buried by the sepulchre of his grandsire Mahomet; but Ayesha, whose hatred for the family of Ali went beyond the grave, declared that the mansion was hers, and refused her consent; he was therefore, interred in the common burial-ground of the city.

Ayesha, herself, died sometime afterwards, in the fifty-eighth year of the Hegira, having survived the prophet forty-seven years. She was often called the Prophetess, and generally denominated the Mother of the Faithful, although she had never borne any issue to Mahomet, and had employed her widowhood in intrigues to prevent Ali and his children,

who were the only progeny of the prophet, from sitting on the throne of the Caliphs. All the other wives of Mahomet who survived him, passed the remainder of their lives in widowhood, but none, save her, seem to have been held in especial reverence.

Chapter V.

Moslem Conquests in Northern Africa—Achievements of Acbah—His Death.

THE conquest of Northern Africa, so auspiciously commenced by Abdallah Ibn Saad, had been suspended for a number of years by the pressure of other concerns, and particularly by the siege of Constantinople, which engrossed a great part of the Moslem forces; in the meantime Cyrene had shaken off the yoke, all Cyrenaica was in a state of insurrection, and there was danger that the places which had been taken, and the posts which had been established by the Arab conquerors would be completely lost.

The Caliph Moawyah now looked round for some active and able general, competent to secure and extend his sway along the African sea-coast. Such a one he found in Acbah Ibn Nafe el Fehri, whom he despatched from Damascus with ten thousand horse. Acbah

made his way with all speed into Africa, his forces augmenting as he proceeded, by the accession of barbarian troops. He passed triumphantly through Cyrenaica; laid close siege to the city of Cyrene, and retook it notwithstanding its strong walls and great population; but in the course of the siege many of its ancient and magnificent edifices were destroyed.

Achbah continued his victorious course westward, traversing wildernesses sometimes barren and desolate, sometimes entangled with forests, and infested by serpents and savage animals, until he reached the domains of ancient Carthage, the present territory of Tunis. Here he determined to found a city to serve as a stronghold, and a place of refuge in the heart of these conquered regions. The site chosen was a valley closely wooded, and abounding with lions, tigers, and serpents. The Arabs give a marvellous account of the founding of the city. Acbah, say they, went forth into the forest, and adjured its savage inhabitants. "Hence! avaunt! wild beasts and serpents! Hence, quit this wood and valley!" This solemn adjuration he repeated three several times, on three several days, and not a lion, tiger, leopard, nor serpent, but departed from the place.

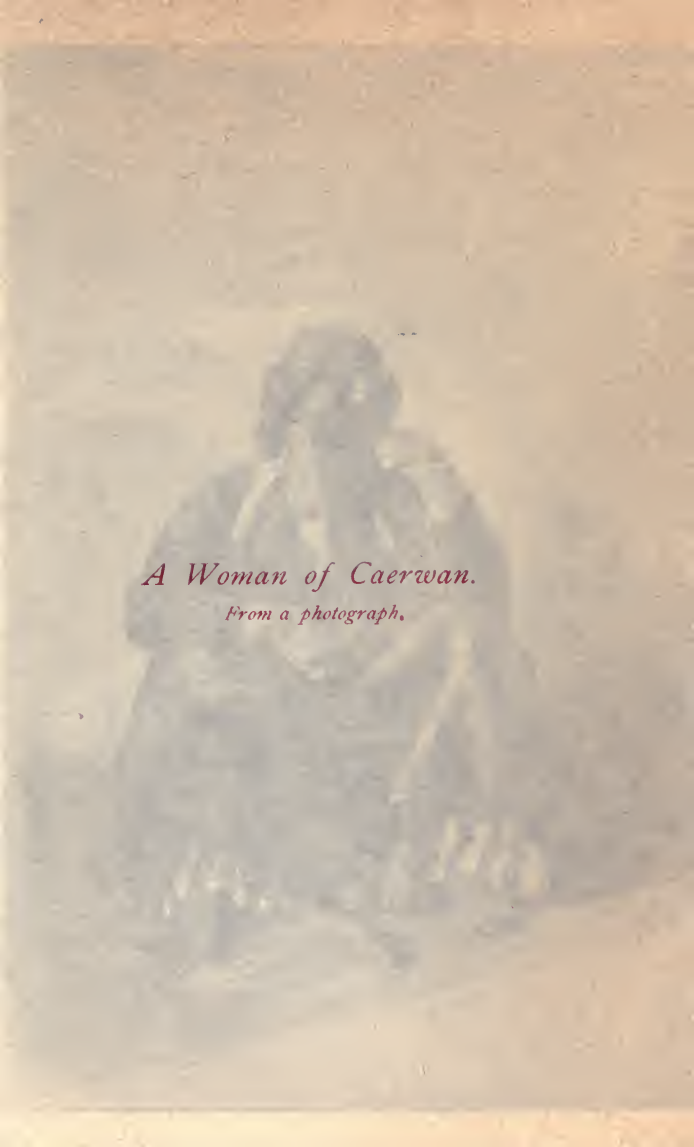
Others, less poetic, record that he cleared away a forest which had been a lurking-place not merely for wild beasts and serpents, but for rebels and barbarous hordes; that he used the wood in contructing walls for his new city, and when these were completed, planted his lance in the centre, and exclaimed to his followers, "This is your Caravan." Such was the origin of the city of Kairwan or Caerwan, situated thirty-three leagues southeast of Carthage, and twelve from the sea, on the borders of the great desert. Here Acbah fixed his seat of government, erecting mosques and other public edifices, and holding all the surrounding country in subjection.

While Acbah was thus honorably occupied, the Caliph Moawyah, little aware of the immense countries embraced in these recent conquests, united them with Egypt under one command, as if they had been two small provinces, and appointed Muhegir Ibn Obmm Dinar, one of the Ansari, as emir or governor. Muhegir was an ambitious, or rather an envious and perfidious man. Scarce had he entered upon his government, when he began to sicken with envy of the brilliant fame of Acbah and his vast popularity, not merely with the army, but throughout the country; he accordingly made such unfavorable reports of

the character and conduct of that general, in his letters to the Caliph, that the latter, was induced to displace him from the command of the African army, and recall him to Damascus.

The letter of recall being sent under cover to Muhegir, he transmitted it by Muslama Ibn Machlad, one of his generals, to Acbah, charging his envoy to proceed with great caution, and to treat Acbah with profound deference, lest the troops, out of their love for him, should resist the order for his deposition. Muslama found Acbah in his camp at Cyrene, and presented him the Caliph's letter of recall, and a letter from Muhegir as governor of the province, letting him know that Muslama and the other generals were authorized to arrest him should he hesitate to obey the command of the Caliph.

There was no hesitation on the part of Acbah. He at once discerned whence the blow proceeded. "O God!" exclaimed he, "spare my life until I can vindicate myself from the slanders of Muhegir Ibn Omm Dinar." He then departed instantly, without even entering his house; made his way with all speed to Damascus, and appeared before Moawyah in the presence of his generals and the officers of his court. Addressing the Caliph with noble indignation, "I have trav-



A Woman of Caerwan.

From a photograph.

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The letter of recall being sent under cover to Mulaggir, he transmitted it by Muslama Ibn Mashhad, one of his generals, to Acbah, charging his envoy to proceed with great caution, and to treat Acbah with profound deference, lest the troops, out of their love for him, should resist the [illegible] in the deposition. Muslama found Acbah [illegible] at Cyrene, and presented him the [illegible] of recall, and a letter [illegible] of the [illegible], letting him [illegible] and the other generals were authorized to arrest him should he hesitate to obey the command of the Caliph.

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ersed deserts," said he, "and encountered savage tribes; I have conquered towns and regions, and have brought their infidel inhabitants to the knowledge of God and his law. I have built mosques and palaces, and fortified our dominion over the land, and in reward I have been degraded from my post, and summoned hither as a culprit. I appeal to your justice, whether I have merited such treatment?"

Moawyah felt rebuked by the magnanimous bearing of his general, for he was aware that he had been precipitate in condemning him on false accusations. "I am already informed," said he, "of the true nature of the case. I now know who is Muhegir, and who is Acbah; return to the command of the army, and pursue your glorious career of conquest."

Although it was not until the succeeding caliphate, that Acbah resumed the command in Africa, we will anticipate dates in order to maintain unbroken the thread of his story. In passing through Egypt he deposed Muslama from a command in which he had been placed by Muhegir, and ordered him to remain in one of the Egyptian towns a prisoner at large.

He was grieved to perceive the mischief that had been done in Africa, during his

absence, by Muhegir, who, out of mere envy and jealousy, had endeavored to mar and obliterate all traces of his good deeds; dismantling the cities he had built; destroying his public edifices at Caerwan, and transferring the inhabitants to another place. Acbah stripped him of his command, placed him in irons, and proceeded to remedy the evils he had perpetrated. The population was restored to Caerwan; its edifices were rebuilt and it rose from its temporary decline more prosperous than ever. Acbah then left Zohair Ibn Kais in command of this metropolis, and resumed his career of western conquest, carrying Muhegir with him in chains. He crossed the kingdom of Numidia, now Algiers, and the vast regions of Mauritania, now Morocco, subduing their infidel inhabitants or converting them with the sword, until coming to the western shores of Africa, he spurred his charger into the waves of the Atlantic, until they rose to his saddle girths; then raising his scimetar towards heaven, "O Allah!" cried the zealous Moslem, "did not these profound waters prevent me, still further would I carry the knowledge of thy law, and the reverence of thy holy name?"

While Acbah was thus urging his victorious way to the uttermost bounds of Mauritania, tid-

ings overtook him that the Greeks and barbarians were rising in rebellion in his rear; that the mountains were pouring down their legions, and that his city Caerwan was in imminent danger. He had in fact incurred the danger against which the late Caliph Omar had so often cautioned his too adventurous generals. Turning his steps he hastened back, marching at a rapid rate. As he passed through Zab or Numidia, he was harassed by a horde of Berbers or Moors, headed by Aben Cahina, a native chief of daring prowess, who had descended from the fastnesses of the mountains, in which he had taken refuge from the invaders. This warrior, with his mountain band, hung on the rear of the army, picking off stragglers, and often carrying havoc into the broken ranks, but never venturing on a pitched battle. He gave over his pursuit as they crossed the bounds of Numidia.

On arriving at Caerwan, Acbah found everything secure; the rebellion having been suppressed by the energy and bravery of Zohair, aided by an associate warrior, Omar Ibn Ali, of the tribe of Koreish.

Acbah now distributed a part of his army about the neighborhood, formed of the residue a flying camp of cavalry, and leaving Zohair and his brave associate to maintain the safety

of the metropolis, returned to scour the land of Zab, and take vengeance on the Berber chief, who had harassed and insulted him when on the march.

He proceeded without opposition as far as a place called Téhuda; when in some pass or defile, he found himself surrounded by a great host of Greeks and Berbers, led on by the mountain chief Aben Cahina. In fact, both Christians and Moors, who had so often been in deadly conflict in these very regions, had combined to drive these new intruders from the land.

Acbah scanned the number and array of the advancing enemy, and saw there was no retreat, and that destruction was inevitable. He marshalled his little army of horsemen, however, with great calmness; put up the usual prayers, and exhorted his men to fight valiantly. Summoning Muhegir to his presence, "This," said he, "is a day of liberty and gain for all true Moslems, for it is a day of martyrdom. I would not deprive you of so great a chance for paradise." So saying, he ordered his chains to be taken off.

Muhegir thanked him for the favor, and expressed his determination to die in the cause of the faith. Acbah then gave him arms and a horse, and both of them drawing their swords,

broke the scabbards in token that they would fight until victory or death. The battle was desperate, and the carnage terrible. Almost all the Moslems fought to the very death, asking no quarter. Acbah was one of the last of his devoted band, and his corpse was found scimetar in hand, upon a heap of the enemy whom he had slain.

Chapter VI.

Moawyah Names his Successor—His Last Acts and Death—Traits of his Character.

MOAWYAH was now far advanced in years, and aware that he had not long to live; he sought, therefore, to accomplish a measure which he had long contemplated, and which was indicative of his ambitious character and his pride of family. It was to render the caliphate hereditary, and to perpetuate it in his line. For this purpose he openly named his son Yezid as his successor, and requested the different provinces to send deputies to Damascus to perform the act of fealty to him. The nomination of a successor was what the prophet himself had not done, and what Abu Beker, Omar, and Othman had therefore declined to do; the attempt to render the caliphate hereditary was in direct opposition to the public will manifested repeatedly in respect to Ali; Yezid, to

whom he proposed to bequeath the government, was publicly detested, yet, notwithstanding all these objections, such influence had Moawyah acquired over the public mind, that delegates arrived at Damascus from all parts, and gave their hands to Yezid in pledge of future fealty. Thus was established the dynasty of the Ommiades, which held the caliphate for nearly a hundred years. There were fourteen Caliphs of this haughty line, known as the Pharaohs of the house of Omaya (or rather Ommiah). The ambition of rule manifested in Moawyah, the founder of the dynasty, continued even among his remote descendants, who exercised sovereignty nearly four centuries afterwards in Spain. One of them, anxious to ascend the throne in a time of turbulence and peril, exclaimed: "Only make me king to-day, and you may kill me to-morrow!"

The character of the caliphate had much changed in the hands of Moawyah, and in the luxurious city of Damascus assumed more and more the state of the oriental sovereigns which it superseded. The frugal simplicity of the Arab, and the stern virtues of the primitive disciples of Islam, were softening down and disappearing among the voluptuous delights of Syria. Moawyah, however, endeavored to throw over his favorite city of Damascus some

of the sanctity with which Mecca and Medina were invested. For this purpose he sought to transfer to it, from Medina, the pulpit of the prophet, as also his walking-staff; "for such precious relics of the apostle of God," said he, "ought not to remain among the murderers of Othman."

The staff was found after great search, but when the pulpit was about to be removed, there occurred so great an eclipse of the sun that the stars became visible. The superstitious Arabs considered this a signal of divine disapprobation, and the pulpit was suffered to remain in Medina.

Feeling his end approaching, Moawyah summoned his son Yezid to his presence, and gave advice full of experience and wisdom. "Confide in the Arabs," said he, "as the sure foundation of your power. Prize the Syrians, for they are faithful and enterprising, though prone to degenerate when out of their own country. Gratify the people of Irak in all their demands, for they are restless and turbulent, and would unsheath a hundred thousand scimetars against thee on the least provocation."

"There are four rivals, my son," added he, "on whom thou must keep a vigilant eye; the first is Hosein, the son of Ali, who has great influence in Irak, but he is upright and

sincere, and thy own cousin; treat him, therefore, with clemency, if he fall within thy power. The second is Abdallah Ibn Omar; but he is a devout man, and will eventually come under allegiance to thee. The third is Abda'lrahman; but he is a man of no force of mind, and merely speaks from the dictates of others. He is, moreover, incontinent, and a gambler; he is not a rival to be feared. The fourth is Abdallah Ibn Zobeir; he unites the craft of the fox with the strength and courage of the lion. If he appear against thee, oppose him valiantly; if he offer peace, accept it, and spare the blood of thy people. If he fall within your power, cut him to pieces!"

Moawyah was gathered to his fathers in the sixtieth year of the Hegira, A.D. 679, at the age of seventy, or, as some say, seventy-five years, of which he had reigned nearly twenty. He was interred in Damascus, which he had made the capital of the Moslem Empire, and which continued to be so during the dynasty of the Ommiades. The inscription of his signet was: "Every deed hath its meed"; or, according to others, "All power rests with God."

Though several circumstances in his reign savor of crafty, and even treacherous policy, yet he bears a high name in Moslem history.

His courage was undoubted, and of a generous kind; for though fierce in combat, he was clement in victory. He prided himself greatly upon being of the tribe of Koreish, and was highly aristocratical before he attained to sovereign power; yet he was affable and accessible at all times, and made himself popular among his people. His ambition was tempered with some considerations of justice. He assumed the throne, it is true, by the aid of the scimetar, without regular election; but he subsequently bought off the right of his rival Hassan, the legitimate Caliph, and transcended munificently all the stipulations of his purchase, presenting him, at one time, with four million pieces of gold. One almost regards with incredulity the stories of immense sums passing from hand to hand among these Arab conquerors as freely as bags of dates in their native deserts; but it must be recollected they had the plundering of the rich empires of the East, and as yet were flush with the spoils of recent conquests.

The liberality of Moawyah is extolled as being beyond all bounds; one instance on record of it, however, savors of policy. He gave Ayesha a bracelet valued at a hundred thousand pieces of gold, that had formerly, perhaps, sparkled on the arm of some Semiramis;

but Ayesha, he knew, was a potent friend and a dangerous enemy.

Moawyah was sensible to the charms of poetry, if we may judge from the following anecdotes:

A robber, who had been condemned by the Cadi to have his head cut off, appealed to the Caliph in a copy of verses, pleading the poverty and want by which he had been driven. Touched by the poetry, Moawyah reversed the sentence, and gave the poet a purse of gold, that he might have no plea of necessity for repeating the crime.

Another instance was that of a young Arab, who had married a beautiful damsel, of whom he was so enamored that he lavished all his fortune upon her. The governor of Cufa happening to see her, was so struck with her beauty that he took her from the youth by force. The latter made his complaint to the Caliph in verse, poured forth with Arab eloquence, and with all the passion of a lover, praying redress or death. Moawyah, as before, was moved by the poetic appeal, and sent orders to the governor of Cufa to restore the wife to her husband. The governor, infatuated with her charms, entreated the Caliph to let him have the enjoyment of her for one year, and then to take his head. The curi-

osity of the Caliph was awakened by this amorous contest, and he caused the female to be sent to him. Struck with her ravishing beauty, with the grace of her deportment, and the eloquence of her expressions, he could not restrain his admiration; and in the excitement of the moment told her to choose between the young Arab, the governor of Cufa, and himself. She acknowledged the honor proffered by the Caliph to be utterly beyond her merit; but avowed that affection and duty still inclined her to her husband. Her modesty and virtue delighted Moawyah even more than her beauty; he restored her to her husband, and enriched them both with princely magnificence.

Chapter VII.

Succession of Yezid, Seventh Caliph—Final Fortunes of Hosein, the Son of Ali.

YEZID, the son of Moawyah, succeeded to the caliphate without the ceremony of an election. His inauguration took place in the new moon of the month Rajeb, in the sixtieth year of the Hegira; coincident with the seventh day of April, in the year of our Lord 680. He was thirty-four years of age, and is described as pale and thin, with a ruddy countenance pitted with the small-pox, black eyes, curled hair, and a comely beard. He was not deficient in talent, and possessed the popular gift of poetry. The effect of his residence among the luxuries and refinements of Syria, was evinced in a fondness for silken raiment and the delights of music; but he was stigmatized as base-spirited, sordid, and covetous; grossly sensual and scandalously intemperate.

Notwithstanding all this, he was readily acknowledged as Caliph, throughout the Moslem empire, excepting by Mecca, Medina, and some cities of Babylonia. His first aim was to secure undisputed possession of the caliphate. The only competitors from whom he had danger to apprehend were Hosein, the son of Ali, and Abdallah, the son of Zobeir. They were both at Medina, and he sent orders to Waled Ibn Otbah, the governor of that city, to exact from them an oath of fealty. Waled, who was of an undecided character, consulted Merwân Ibn Hakem, formerly secretary of Othman, and suspected of forging the letter which effected the ruin of that Caliph. He was, in fact, one of the most crafty, as well as able men of the age. His advice to the governor was to summon Hosein and Abdallah to his presence, before they should hear of the death of Moawyah, and concert any measures of opposition ; then to tender to them the oath of fealty to Yezid, and, should they refuse, to smite off their heads.

Hosein and Abdallah discovered the plot in time to effect their escape with their families to Mecca, where they declared themselves openly in opposition to Yezid. In a little while Hosein received secret messages from the people of Cufa, inviting him to their city,

assuring him not merely of protection, but of joyful homage as the son of Ali, the legitimate successor of the prophet. He had only, they said, to show himself in their city, and all Babylonia would rise in arms in his favor.

Hosein sent his cousin, Muslim Ibn Okail, to ascertain the truth of these representations, and to foment the spirit of insurrection, should it really exist among the people of Cufa. Muslim made his way, almost unattended, and with great peril and hardship, across the deserts of Irak. On arriving at Cufa, he was well received by the party of Hosein ; they assured him that eighteen thousand men were ready to sacrifice their blood and treasure in casting down the usurper and upholding the legitimate Caliph. Every day augmented the number of apparent zealots in the cause, until it amounted to one hundred and forty thousand. Of all this, Muslim sent repeated accounts to Hosein, urging him to come on, and assuring him that the conspiracy had been carried on with such secrecy, that Nu'mân Ibn Baschir, the governor of Cufa, had no suspicion of it.

But though the conspiracy had escaped the vigilance of Nu'mân, intimation of it had reached the Caliph Yezid at Damascus, who sent instant orders to Obeid'allah, the emir of

Bassora, to repair with all speed to Cufa, displace its negligent governor, and take that place likewise under his command.

Obeid'allah was the son of Ziyad, and inherited all the energy of his father. Aware that the moment was critical, he set off from Bassora with about a score of fleet horsemen. The people of Cufa were on the lookout for the arrival of Hosein, which was daily expected, when Obeid'allah rode into the city in the twilight at the head of his troopers. He wore a black turban, as was the custom likewise with Hosein. The populace crowded round him, hailing the supposed grandson of the prophet.

"Stand off!" cried the horsemen, fiercely. "It is the emir Obeid'allah."

The crowd shrank back abashed and disappointed, and the emir rode on to the castle. The popular chagrin increased when it was known that he had command of the province; for he was reputed a second Ziyad in energy and decision. His measures soon proved his claim to that character. He discovered and disconcerted the plans of the conspirators; drove Muslim to a premature outbreak; dispersed his hasty levy, and took him prisoner. The latter shed bitter tears on his capture; not on his own account, but on the account of Hosein, whom he feared his letters and san-

guine representations had involved in ruin, by inducing him to come on to Cufa. The head of Muslim was struck off and sent to the Caliph.

His letters had indeed produced the dreaded effect. On receiving them, Hosein prepared to comply with the earnest invitation of the people of Cufa. It was in vain his friends reminded him of the proverbial faithlessness of these people; it was in vain they urged him to wait until they had committed themselves by openly taking the field. It was in vain that his near relative Abdallah Ibn Abbas urged him, at least, to leave the females of his family at Mecca, lest he should be massacred in the midst of them, like the Caliph Othman. Hosein, in the true spirit of a Moslem and predestinarian, declared he would leave the event to God; and accordingly set out with his wives and children, and a number of his relatives, escorted by a handful of Arab troops.

Arrived in the confines of Babylonia, he was met by a body of a thousand horse, led on by Harro, an Arab of the tribe of Temimah. He at first supposed them to be a detachment of his partisans sent to meet him, but was soon informed by Harro that he came from the emir Obeid'allah to conduct him and all the people with him to Cufa.

Hosein haughtily refused to submit to the emir's orders, and represented that he came in peace, invited by the inhabitants of Cufa, as the rightful Caliph. He set forth at the same time the justice of his claims, and endeavored to enlist Harro in his cause, but the latter, though in nowise hostile to him, avoided committing himself, and urged him to proceed quietly to Cufa under his escort.

While they were yet discoursing, four horsemen rode up accompanied by a guide. One of these, named Thirmah, was known to Hosein, and was reluctantly permitted by Harro to converse with him apart. Hosein inquired about the situation of things at Cufa. "The nobles," replied the other, "are now against you to a man; some of the common people are still with you; by to-morrow, however, not a scimetar but will be unsheathed against you."

Hosein inquired about Kais, a messenger whom he had sent in advance to apprise his adherents of his approach. He had been seized on suspicion, ordered as a test, by Obeid'allah, to curse Hosein and his father Ali, and on his refusing had been thrown headlong from the top of the citadel.

Hosein shed tears at hearing the fate of his faithful messenger. "There be some," said

he, in the words of the Koran, "who are already dead, and some who living expect death. Let their mansions, O God, be in the gardens of paradise, and receive us with them to thy mercy."

Thirmah represented to Hosein that his handful of followers would be of no avail against the host prepared to oppose him in the plains of Cufa, and offered to conduct him to the impregnable mountains of Aja, in the province of Naja, where ten thousand men of the tribe of Tay might soon be assembled to defend him. He declined his advice, however, and advanced towards Kadesia, the place famous for the victory over the Persians. Harro and his cavalry kept pace with him, watching every movement, but offering no molestation. The mind of Hosein, however, was darkened by gloomy forebodings. A stupor at times hung over his faculties as he rode slowly along; he appeared to be haunted with a presentiment of death. "We belong to God and to God we must return," exclaimed he, as he roused himself at one time from a dream or reverie. He had beheld in his fantasy, a horseman who had addressed him in warning words, "Men travel in the night, and their destiny travels in the night to meet them." This he pronounced a messenger of death.

In this dubious and desponding mood he was brought to a halt, near the banks of the Euphrates, by the appearance of four thousand men, in hostile array, commanded by Amar Ibn Saad. These, likewise, had been sent out by the emir Obeid'allah, who was full of uneasiness lest there should be some popular movement in favor of Hosein. The latter, however, was painfully convinced by this repeated appearance of hostile troops, without any armament in his favor, that the fickle people of Cufa were faithless to him. He held a parley with Amar, who was a pious and good man, and had come out very unwillingly against a descendant of the prophet, stated to him the manner in which he had been deceived by the people of Cufa, and now offered to return to Mecca. Amar despatched a fleet messenger to apprise the emir of this favorable offer, hoping to be excused from using violence against Hosein. Obeid'allah wrote in reply: "Get between him and the Euphrates; cut him off from the water as he did Othman; force him to acknowledge allegiance to Yezid, and then we will treat of terms."

Amar obeyed these orders with reluctance, and the little camp of Hosein suffered the extremities of thirst. Still he could not be brought to acknowledge Yezid as Caliph. He

now offered three things, to go to Damascus and negotiate matters personally with Yezid; to return into Arabia; or to repair to some frontier post in Khorassan and fight against the Turks. These terms were likewise transmitted by Amar to Obeid'allah.

The emir was exasperated at these delays, which he considered as intended to gain time for tampering with the public feelings. His next letter to Amar was brief and explicit. "If Hosein and his men submit and take the oath of allegiance, treat them kindly; if they refuse, slay them—ride over them—trample them under the feet of thy horses!" This letter was sent by Shamar, a warrior of note, and of a fierce spirit. He had private instructions. "If Amar fail to do as I have ordered, strike off his head and take command of his troops." He was furnished also with a letter of protection, and passports for four of the sons of Ali, who had accompanied their brother Hosein.

Amar, on receiving the letter of the emir, had another parley with Hosein. He found him in front of his tent conversing with his brother Al Abbas, just after the hour of evening prayer, and made known to him the peremptory demand of the emir and its alternative. He also produced the letter of

protection and the passports for his brothers, but they refused to accept them.

Hosein obtained a truce until the morning to consider the demand of the emir; but his mind was already made up. He saw that all hope of honorable terms was vain, and he resolved to die.

After the departure of Amar, he remained seated alone at the door of his tent, leaning on his sword, lost in gloomy cogitation on the fate of the coming day. A heaviness again came over him, with the same kind of portentous fantasies that he had already experienced. The approach of his favorite sister, Zeinab, roused him. He regarded her with mournful significance. "I have just seen," said he, "in a dream, our grandsire the prophet, and he said, 'Thou wilt soon be with me in paradise.'"

The boding mind of Zeinab interpreted the portent. "Woe unto us and our family," cried she, smiting her breast; "our mother Fatima is dead, and our father Ali, and our brother Hassan! Alas for the desolation of the past and the destruction that is to come!" So saying, her grief overcame her, and she fell into a swoon. Hosein raised her tenderly, sprinkled water in her face, and restored her to consciousness. He entreated her to rely with confidence on God, reminding her that all the

people of the earth must die, and everything that exists must perish, but that God, who created them, would restore them, and take them to himself. "My father, and my mother, and my brother," said he, "were better than I, yet they died, and every Moslem has had an example in the death of the apostle of God." Taking her then by the hand, he led her into the tent, charging her, in case of his death, not to give way thus to immoderate sorrow.

He next addressed his friends and followers. "These troops by whom we are surrounded," said he, "seek no life but mine, and will be contented with my death. Tarry not with me, therefore, to your destruction, but leave me to my fate."

"God forbid," cried Al Abbas, "that we should survive your fall;" and his words were echoed by the rest.

Seeing his little band thus determined to share his desperate fortunes, Hosein prepared to sell their lives dear, and make their deaths a memorable sacrifice. By his orders all the tents were disposed in two lines, and the cords interwoven so as to form barriers on both sides of the camp, while a deep trench in the rear was filled with wood, to be set on fire in case of attack. It was assailable, therefore, only in front. This done, the devoted band con-

scious that the next day was to be their last, passed the night in prayer; while a troop of the enemy's horse kept riding round to prevent their escape.

When the morning dawned, Hosein prepared for battle. His whole force amounted only to two-score foot soldiers, and two-and-thirty horse; but all were animated with the spirit of martyrs. Hosein and several of his chief men washed, anointed, and perfumed themselves; "for in a little while," said they, "we shall be with the black-eyed houris of paradise."

His steadfastness of soul, however, was shaken by the loud lamentations of his sisters and daughters, and the thought of the exposed and desolate state in which his death would leave them. He called to mind, too, the advice which he had neglected of Abdallah Ibn Abbas, to leave his women in safety at Mecca. "God will reward thee, Abdallah!" exclaimed he, in the fullness of his feelings.

A squadron of thirty horse, headed by Harro, now wheeled up, but they came as friends and allies. Harro repented him of having given the first check to Hosein, and now came in atonement to fight and die for him. "Alas for you, men of Cufa!" cried he, as Amar and his troops approached; "you have invited the

descendant of the prophet to your city, and now come to fight against him. You have cut off from him and his family the waters of the Euphrates, which are free even to infidels and the beasts of the field, and have shut him up like a lion in the toils."

Amar began to justify himself and to plead the orders of the emir; but the fierce Shamar cut short all parley by letting fly an arrow into the camp of Hosein; calling all to witness that he struck the first blow. A skirmish ensued, but the men of Hosein kept within their camp, where they could only be reached by the archers. From time to time there were single combats in defiance, as was customary with the Arabs. In these the greatest loss was on the side of the enemy, for Hosein's men fought with the desperation of men resolved on death.

Amar now made a general assault, but the camp being open only in front, was successfully defended. Shamar and his followers attempted to pull down the tents, but met with vigorous resistance. He thrust his lance through the tent of Hosein, and called for fire to burn it. The women ran out shrieking. "The fire of Jehennam be thy portion!" cried Hosein, "wouldst thou destroy my family?"

Even the savage Shamar stayed his hand at the sight of defenceless women, and he and his

band drew off with the loss of several of their number.

Both parties desisted from the fight at the hour of noontide prayer; and Hosein put up the prayer of Fear, which is only used in time of extremity.

When the prayers were over the enemy renewed the assault, but chiefly with arrows from a distance. The faithful followers of Hosein were picked off one by one, until he was left almost alone; yet no one ventured to close upon him. An arrow from a distance pierced his little son Abdallah, whom he had upon his knee. Hosein caught his blood in the hollow of his hand and threw it toward heaven. "O God," exclaimed he, "if thou withholdest help from us, at least take vengeance on the wicked for this innocent blood."

His nephew, a beautiful child, with jewels in his ears, was likewise wounded in his arms. "Allah will receive thee, my child," said Hosein; "thou wilt soon be with thy forefathers in paradise."

At this moment Zeinab rushed forth imprecating the vengeance of Heaven upon the murderers of her family. Her voice was overpowered by the oaths and curses of Shamar, who closed with his men upon Hosein. The

latter fought desperately, and laid many dead around him, but his strength was failing him. It became a massacre rather than a fight; he sank to the earth, and was stripped ere life was extinct. Thirty wounds were counted in his body, and four-and-thirty bruises. His head was then cut off to be sent to Obeid'-allah, and Shamar, with his troops, rode forward and backward over the body, as he had been ordered, until it was trampled into the earth.

Seventy-two followers of Hosein were slain in this massacre, seventeen of whom were descendants from Fatima. Eighty-eight of the enemy were killed, and a great number wounded. All the arms and furniture of Hosein and his family were taken as lawful spoils, although against the command of Amar.

Shamar despatched one of his troopers to bear the head of Hosein to the emir Obeid'allah. He rode with all speed, but arrived at Cufa after the gates of the castle were closed. Taking the gory trophy to his own house until morning, he showed it to his wife; but she shrank from him with horror, as one guilty of the greatest outrage to the family of the prophet, and from that time forward renounced all intercourse with him.

When the head was presented to Obeid'allah, he smote it on the mouth with his staff. A venerable Arab present was shocked at his impiety. "By Allah!" exclaimed he, "I have seen those lips pressed by the sacred lips of the prophet!"

As Obeid'allah went forth from the citadel, he beheld several women, meanly attired and seated disconsolately on the ground at the threshold. He had to demand three times who they were before he was told that it was Zeinab, sister of Hosein, and her maidens. "Allah be praised," cried he, with ungenerous exultation, "who has brought this proud woman to shame, and wrought death upon her family." "Allah be praised," retorted Zeinab, haughtily, "who hath glorified our family by his holy apostle Mahomet. As to my kindred, death was decreed to them, and they have gone to their resting-place; but God will bring you and them together, and will judge between you."

The wrath of the emir was inflamed by this reply, and his friends, fearful he might be provoked to an act of violence, reminded him that she was a woman and unworthy of his anger.

"Enough," cried he, "let her revile; Allah has given my soul full satisfaction in the death

of her brother, and the ruin of her rebellious race."

"True!" replied Zeinab, "you have indeed destroyed our men, and cut us up root and branch. If that be any satisfaction to your soul, you have it."

The emir looked at her with surprise. "Thou art indeed," said he, "a worthy descendant of Ali, who was a poet and a man of courage."

"Courage," replied Zeinab, "is not a woman's attribute; but what my heart dictates, my tongue shall utter."

The emir cast his eyes on Ali, the son of Hosein, a youth just approaching manhood, and ordered him to be beheaded. The proud heart of Zeinab now gave way. Bursting into tears she flung her arms round her nephew. "Hast thou not drunk deep enough of the blood of our family?" cried she to Obeid'allah; "and dost thou thirst for the blood of this youth? Take mine, too, with it, and let me die with him."

The emir gazed on her again, and with greater astonishment; he mused for awhile, debating within himself, for he was disposed to slay the lad; but was moved by the tenderness of Zeinab. At length his better feelings prevailed, and the life of Ali was spared.

The head of Hosein was transmitted to the Caliph Yezid, at Damascus, in charge of the savage-hearted Shamar; and with it were sent Zeinab and her women, and the youth Ali. The latter had a chain round his neck, but the youth carried himself proudly, and would never vouchsafe a word to his conductors.

When Shamar presented the head with the greetings of Obeid'allah, the Caliph shed tears, for he recalled the dying counsel of his father with respect to the son of Ali. "O Hosein!" ejaculated he, "hadst thou fallen into my hands thou wouldst not have been slain." Then giving vent to his indignation against the absent Obeid'allah, "The curse of God," exclaimed he, "be upon the son of Somyah." *

He had been urged by one of his courtiers to kill Ali, and extinguish the whole generation of Hosein, but milder counsels prevailed. When the women and children were brought before him, in presence of the Syrian nobility, he was shocked at their mean attire, and again uttered a malediction on Obeid'allah. In conversation with Zeinab, he spoke with disparagement of her father Ali and her brother Hosein, but the proud heart of this intrepid woman again rose to her lips, and she replied

* A sneer at Obeid'allah's illegitimate descent from Somyah, the wife of a Greek slave.

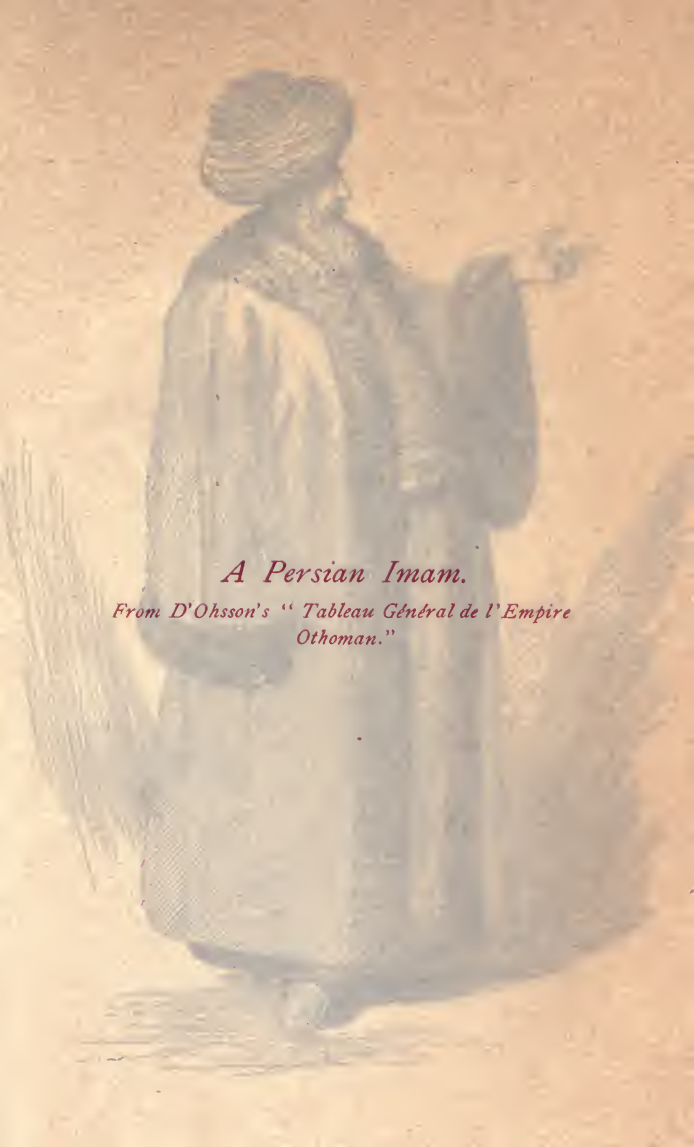
with a noble scorn and just invective, that shamed him to silence.

Yezid now had Zeinab and the other females of the family of Hosein treated with proper respect; baths were provided for them, and apparel suited to their rank; they were entertained in his palace, and the widowed wives of his father Moawyah came and kept them company, and joined with them in mourning for Hosein. Yezid acted also with great kindness toward Ali and Amru, the sons of Hosein, taking them with him in his walks. Amru was as yet a mere child. Yezid asked him one day jestingly, "Wilt thou fight with my son Khaled?" The urchin's eye flashed fire. "Give him a knife," cried he, "and give me one!" "Beware of this child," said a crafty old courtier who stood by, and who was an enemy to the house of Ali. "Beware of this child; depend upon it, one serpent is the parent of another."

After a time when the family of Hosein wished to depart for Medina, Yezid furnished them abundantly with every comfort for the journey, and a safe convoy under a careful officer, who treated them with all due deference. When their journey was accomplished, Zeinab and Fatima, the young daughter of Hosein, would have presented their conductor

with some of their jewels, but the worthy Syrian declined their offer. "Had I acted for reward," said he, "less than these jewels would have sufficed; but what I have done was for the love of God, and for the sake of your relationship to the prophet."

The Persians hold the memory of Hosein in great veneration, entitling him Shahed or the Martyr, and Seyejed or Lord; and he and his lineal descendants for nine generations are enrolled among the twelve Imams or Pontiffs of the Persian creed. The anniversary of his martyrdom is called Rus Hosein (the day of Hosein), and is kept with great solemnity. A splendid monument was erected in after years on the spot where he fell, and was called in Arabic Meshed Hosein, The Sepulchre of Hosein. The Shyites, or sectaries of Ali, relate divers prodigies as having signalized his martyrdom. The sun withdrew his light, the stars twinkled at noonday and clashed against each other, and the clouds rained showers of blood. A supernatural light beamed from the head of the martyr, and a flock of white birds hovered around it. These miracles, however, are stoutly denied by the sect of Moslems called Sonnites, who hold Ali and his race in abomination.



A Persian Imam.

From D'Ohsson's "Tableau Général de l'Empire Othoman."

[illegible] of their jewels, but the worthy [illegible] deemed their offer. "Had I acted for [illegible]," said he, "but these these jewels [illegible] suffered, but what I have done [illegible] the [illegible] of God, and for the sake of [illegible] to the prophet."

[illegible] held the memory of Hossein in [illegible], entitling him Shahed or the [illegible], and Sheyed or Lord; and he and his [illegible] for nine generations are [illegible] the native Imams or Pontiffs of [illegible]. The anniversary of his [illegible] is called [illegible] of [illegible]. A [illegible] in order, years [illegible] and was called in [illegible] Hossein, The Sepulchre of [illegible]. The [illegible] or sectaries of Ali, [illegible] prodigies as having signalised his [illegible]. The sun withdrew his light, the [illegible] and clashed against [illegible] and the [illegible] of [illegible]. A [illegible] from the [illegible] of the martyr and a flock of white birds [illegible]. These miracles, however, [illegible] by the sect of Moslems called [illegible], who held Ali and his race in [illegible].

Chapter VIII.

Insurrection of Abdallah Ibn Zobeir—Medina Taken and Sacked—Mecca Besieged—Death of Yezid.

THE death of Hosein had removed one formidable rival of Yezid; but gave strength to the claims of another, who was scarcely less popular. This was Abdallah, the son of Zobeir; honored for his devotion to the faith; beloved for the amenity of his manners, and of such adroit policy, that he soon managed to be proclaimed Caliph by the partisans of the house of Haschem, and a large portion of the people of Medina and Mecca. The martyrdom, as he termed it, of Hosein furnished him a theme for public harangues, with which, after his inauguration, he sought to sway the popular feelings. He called to mind the virtues of that grandson of the Prophet, his pious watchings, fastings, and prayers; the perfidy of the people of Cufa, to which he had fallen a victim; the lofty heroism of his latter moments, and the savage atrocities

which had accompanied his murder. The public mind was heated by these speeches; the enthusiasm awakened for the memory of Hosein was extended to his politic eulogist. An Egyptian soothsayer, famed for skill in divination, and who had studied the prophet Daniel, declared that Abdallah would live and die a king; and this operated powerfully in his favor among the superstitious Arabs, so that his party rapidly increased in numbers.

The Caliph Yezid, although almost all the provinces of the empire were still in allegiance to him, was alarmed at the movements of this new rival. He affected, however, to regard him with contempt, and sent a silver collar to Merwân Ibn Hakem, then governor of Medina, directing him to put it round the neck of the "mock Caliph," should he persist in his folly, and send him in chains to Damascus. Merwân, however, who was of a wily character himself, and aware of the craft and courage of Abdallah, and his growing popularity in Medina, evaded the execution of the order.

Yezid had no better success in his endeavors to crush the rising power of Abdallah at Mecca. In vain he repeatedly changed his governors of that city; each in his turn was outwitted by the superior sagacity of Abdallah, or overawed by the turbulent discontent of the people.

Various negotiations took place between Yezid and these disaffected cities, and despatches were sent from the latter to Damascus; but these only rendered the schism in the caliphate more threatening. The deputies brought back accounts of the dissolute life of Yezid, which shocked the pious and abstemious Arabs of the sacred cities. They represented him as destitute of religion and morality; neglectful of the hours of worship; a gross sensualist, addicted to wine and banqueting; an effeminate voluptuary, passing his time amid singing and dancing women, listening to music and loose minstrelsy, and surrounded by dogs and eunuchs.

The contempt and loathing caused by their representations were fomented by the partisans of Abdallah Ibn Zobeir, and extended to the whole house of Ommiah, of which Yezid was a member. Open rebellion at length broke out in a manner characteristic of the Arabs. During an assemblage in the mosque of Medina, one of the conspirators threw his turban on the ground, exclaiming, "I cast off Yezid as I cast off this turban." Another seconded him with the exclamation, "I cast off Yezid as I cast off this shoe." Heaps of shoes and turbans soon showed that the feeling was unanimous.

The next move was to banish the house of Ommiah and all its dependants; but these, to the number of a thousand, took refuge in the palace of Merwân Ibn Hakem, the governor, who was of that race. Here they were closely besieged, and sent off to Yezid, imploring instant succor.

It was with difficulty Yezid could prevail upon any of his generals to engage in so unpopular a cause. Meslem Ibn Okbah, a stout-hearted but infirm old general, at length undertook it; but observed, with contempt, that a thousand men who suffered themselves to be cooped up like fowls, without fighting, scarce deserved assistance.

When the troops were about to depart, Yezid rode about among them, his scimetar by his side, and an Arab bow across his shoulder, calling upon them to show their loyalty and courage. His instructions to Meslem were to summon the city of Medina, three days in succession, before he made any assault; if it refused to surrender, he should, after taking it, give it up to three days' pillage. He charged him, however, to be careful of the safety of the youth Ali, son of Hosein, who was in the city, but had taken no part in the rebellion.

Meslem departed at the head of twelve thousand horse and five thousand foot. When he

arrived before Medina he found a huge trench digged round the city, and great preparations made for defence. On three successive days he summoned it to surrender, and on each day received a refusal. On the fourth day he attacked it by storm, making his assault on the east side, that the besieged might be blinded by the rising sun. The city held out until most of its prime leaders were slain ; it would then have capitulated, but the stern old general compelled an unconditional surrender.

Meslem entered the city sword in hand, and sent instantly for Ali, the youthful son of Hosein, whom he placed on his own camel, and furnished with a trusty guard. His next care was to release the thousand men of the house of Ommiah from confinement, lest they should be involved in the sacking of the city ; this done, he abandoned the place for three days to his soldiery, and a scene of slaughter, violence, and rapine ensued, too horrible to be detailed. Those of the inhabitants who survived the massacre were compelled to submit as slaves and vassals of Yezid. The rigid severity of old Meslem, which far surpassed his orders, gained him the appellation of Musreph, or, The Extortionate. His memory has ever been held in odium by the Moslems, for the outrages which he permitted in

this sacred city. This capture of Medina took place at night, in the sixty-third year of the Hegira, and the year 682 of the Christian era.

The old general now marched on to wreak the same fate upon Mecca; but his fires were burnt out; he died on the march of fatigue, infirmity, and old age, and the command devolved on a Syrian general named Hozein Ibn Thamir. The latter led his force up to the walls of Mecca, where Abdallah Ibn Zobeir commanded in person. For the space of forty days he besieged the city; battering the walls with engines brought from Syria. In the course of the siege a part of the Caaba was beaten down and the rest burnt. Some ascribe the fire to the engines of the besiegers; others affirm that Abdallah, hearing a shouting in the night, caused a flaming brand to be elevated on a lance to discover the cause, and that the fire communicated to the veil which covered the edifice.

Mecca was reduced to extremity, and the inhabitants began to dread the fate of Medina, when a swift messenger brought to Abdallah Ibn Zobeir the joyful tidings of the death of Yezid. He immediately mounted the walls and demanded of the besiegers why they continued to fight, seeing that their master Yezid was no more. They regarded his words as a

mere subterfuge, and continued the attack with increased vigor. The intelligence, however was speedily confirmed.

Hozein now held a conference with Abdallah; he expressed an ardent desire to put an end to all further effusion of kindred blood; and proffered the allegiance of himself and his army, in which were some of the leading men of Syria. Abdallah, for once, was too cautious for his own good. He shrank from trusting himself with Hozein and his army; he permitted them, however, at their earnest request to walk in religious procession round the ruins of the Caaba, of course without arms; after which Hozein and his host departed on the march homeward; and the late beleaguered family of Ommiah acccompanied them to Syria.

The death of the Caliph Yezid took place at Hawwarin, in Syria, in the sixty-fourth year of the Hegira, A.D. 683, in the thirty-ninth year of his age, after a reign of three years and six months. He was cut down in the flower of his days, say the Moslem writers, in consequence of his impiety in ordering the sacking of Medina, the burial-place of the Prophet; for the latter had predicted, "Whoever injureth Medina, shall melt away even as salt melteth in water." The Persian writers also,

sectarians of Ali, hold the memory of Yezid in abhorrence, charging him with the deaths of Hassan and Hosein, and accompany his name with the imprecation, "May he be accursed of God!"

Chapter IX.

Inauguration of Moawyah II., Eighth Caliph—His Abdication and Death—Merwân Ibn Hakem and Abdallah Ibn Zobeir, Rival Caliphs—Civil Wars in Syria.

ON the death of Yezid, his son, Moawyah II., was proclaimed at Damascus, being the third Caliph of the house of Ommiah. He was in the twenty-first year of his age, feeble in mind and body, and swayed in his opinions and actions by his favorite teacher, Omar Almeksus, of the sect of the Kadarii, who maintain the free-will of men, and that a contrary opinion would make God the author of sin.

Moawyah assumed the supreme authority with extreme reluctance, and felt his incompetency to its duties; for the state of his health obliged him to shun daylight, and keep in darkened rooms; whence the Arabs, in their propensity to by-names, gave him the deri-

sive appellation of Abuleilah, "Father of the Night."

He abdicated at the end of six months, alleging his incompetency. The Ommiades were indignant at his conduct; they attributed it, and probably with reason, to the counsels of the sage Omar Almeksus, on whom they are said to have wreaked their rage by burying him alive.

Moawyah refused to nominate a successor. His grandfather, Moawyah, he said, had wrested the sceptre from the hands of a better man; his father Yezid had not merited so great a trust, and he himself, being unworthy and unfit to wield it, was equally unworthy to appoint a successor; he left the election, therefore, to the chiefs of the people. In all which he probably spake according to the dictates of the sage Omar Almeksus.

As soon as he had thrown off the cares of government, he shut himself up in the twilight gloom of his chamber, whence he never stirred until his death, which happened soon after: caused, some say, by the plague, others by poison. His own diseased frame and morbid temperament, however, account sufficiently for his dissolution.

The election of a Caliph again distracted the Moslem empire. The leading men at Damas-

cus determined upon Merwân Ibn Hakem, of the family of Ommiah, and once the secretary of state of Othman, who had so craftily managed the correspondence of that unfortunate Caliph. He was now well stricken in years; tall and meagre, with a pale face and yellow beard, doubtless tinged according to oriental usage. Those who elected him took care to stipulate that he should not nominate any of his posterity as his successor; but should be succeeded by Khaled, the son of Yezid, as yet a minor. Merwân, in his eagerness for power, pledged himself without hesitation; how faithfully he redeemed his pledge will be seen hereafter.

While this election was held at Damascus, Abdallah Ibn Zobeir was acknowledged as Caliph in Mecca, Medina, and throughout Arabia, as also in Khorassan, in Babylonia, and in Egypt.

Another candidate for the supreme power unexpectedly arose in Obeid'allah Ibn Ziyad, the emir of Bassora; the same who had caused the massacre of Hosein. He harangued an assemblage of the people of Bassora on the state of the contending factions in Syria and Arabia, the importance of their own portion of the empire, so capable of sustaining itself in independence, and the policy of appointing some

able person as a protector to watch over the public weal, until these dissensions should cease, and a Caliph be unanimously appointed. The assembly was convinced by his reasoning, and urged him to accept the appointment. He declined it repeatedly with politic grace, but was at length prevailed upon; and the leaders gave him their hands, promising allegiance to him as a provisional chief, until a Caliph should be regularly elected. His authority, however, was but of short duration. The people of Cufa, who had experienced his tyranny as governor, rejected with scorn his election as protector; their example reacted upon the fickle Bassorians, who suddenly revoked their late act of allegiance, rose in tumultuous opposition to the man they had so recently honored, and Obeid'allah was fain to disguise himself in female attire, and take refuge in the house of an adherent. During his sway, however, he had secured an immense amount of gold from the public treasury. This he now shared among his partisans, and distributed by handfuls among the multitude; but though he squandered in this way about two hundred thousand pieces of gold upon the populace, and raised a few transient tumults in his favor, he was ultimately obliged to fly for his life, and his effects were pillaged by

the rabble. So fared it with the temporary tyrant who smote the gory head of the virtuous Hosein.

He fled by night at the head of only a hundred men; after a time weariness compelled him to exchange the camel on which he was mounted for an ass. In this humble plight, with drooping head and legs dangling to the ground, journeyed the imperious Obeid'allah, who, but the day before, was governor of Babylonia, and aspired to the throne of the Caliphs. One of his attendants noticing his dejection, and hearing him mutter to himself, supposed him smitten with contrition, and upbraiding himself with having incurred these calamities, as a judgment for the death of Hosein; he ventured to suggest his thoughts and to offer consolation, but Obeid'allah quickly let him know that his only repentance and self-reproach were for not having attacked the faithless Bassorians, and having struck off their heads at the very outbreak of their revolt. Obeid'allah effected his escape into Syria, and arrived at Damascus in time to take an active part in the election of Merwân to the caliphate; in the meantime Bassora declared its allegiance to Abdallah Ibn Zobeir.

The claims of Merwân to the caliphate were acknowledged in Syria alone; but Syria, if

undivided, was an empire in itself. It was divided, however. A powerful faction, headed by Dehac Ibn Kais, late governor of Cufa, disputed the pretensions of Merwân, and declared for Abdallah. They appeared in arms in the plain near Damascus. Merwân took the field against them in person; a great and sanguinary battle took place, Dehac and fourscore of the flower of Syrian nobility were slain, and an immense number of their adherents. Victory declared for Merwân. He called off his soldiers from the pursuit, reminding them that the fugitives were their brethren.

When the head of Dehac was brought to him he turned from it with sorrow. "Alas!" exclaimed he, "that an old and worn-out man like myself should occasion the young and vigorous to be cut to pieces!"

His troops hailed him as Caliph beyond all dispute, and bore him back in triumph to Damascus. He took up his abode in the palace of his predecessors Moawyah and Yezid; but now came a harder part of his task. It had been stipulated that, at his death, Khaled the son of Yezid, should be his successor, it was now urged that he should marry the widow of Yezid, the mother of the youth, and thus make himself his legitimate guardian.

The aged Merwân would fain have evaded

this condition, but it was forced upon him as a measure of policy, and he complied; no sooner, however, was the marriage solemnized than he left his capital and his bride, and set off with an army for Egypt, to put down the growing ascendancy of Abdallah in that region. He sent in advance, Amru Ibn Saad, who acted with such promptness and vigor that, while the Caliph was yet on the march, he received tidings that the lieutenant of Abdallah had been driven from the province, and the Egyptians brought under subjection; whereupon Merwân turned his face again toward Damascus.

Intelligence now overtook him that an army under Musab, brother of Abdallah, was advancing upon Egypt. The old Caliph again faced about, and resumed his march in that direction, but again was anticipated by Amru, who routed Musab in a pitched battle, and completely established the sway of Merwân over Egypt. The Caliph now appointed his son Abd'alaziz to the government of that important country, and once more returned to Damascus, whither he was soon followed by the victorious Amru.

Chapter X.

State of Affairs in Khorassan—Conspiracy at Cufa—Faction of the Penitents—Their Fortunes—Death of the Caliph Merwân.

IN the present divided state of the Moslem empire, the people of Khorassan remained neuter, refusing to acknowledge either Caliph. They appointed Salem, the son of Ziyad, to act as regent, until the unity of the Moslem government should be restored. He continued for a length of time in this station, maintaining the peace of the province, and winning the hearts of the inhabitants by his justice, equity, and moderation.

About this time there was a sudden awakening among the sect of Ali, in Babylonia. The people of Cufa, proverbially fickle and faithless, were seized with tardy remorse for the fate of Hosein, of which they were conscious of being the cause. Those who had not personally assisted in his martyrdom, formed an

association to avenge his death. Above a hundred of the chief men of the country joined them; they took the name of the Penitents, to express their contrition for having been instrumental in the death of the martyr, and they chose for their leader one of the veteran companions of the prophet, the venerable Solyman Ibn Sorâd, who devoted his gray hairs to this pious vengeance.

The awakening spread far and wide; in a little while upwards of sixteen thousand names were enrolled; a general appeal to arms was anticipated throughout the country, and the veteran Solyman called upon all true Moslems disposed to prosecute this "holy war," to assemble at a place called Nochaila. Before the appointed time, however, the temporary remorse of the people of Cufa had subsided; the enthusiasm for the memory of Hosein had cooled throughout the province; intriguing meddlers, jealous of the appointment of Solyman, had been at work, and, when the veteran came to the place of assemblage, he found but an inconsiderable number prepared for action.

He now despatched two horsemen to Cufa, who arrived there at the hour of the last evening prayer, galloped through the streets to the great mosque, rousing the Penitents with the war cry of "Vengeance for Hosein!" The

call was not lost on the real enthusiasts; a kind of madness seized upon many of the people, who thronged after the couriers, echoing the cry of vengeance. The cry penetrated into the depths of the houses. One man tore himself from the arms of a beautiful and tenderly beloved wife, and began to arm for battle. She asked him if he were mad. "No!" cried he, "but I hear the summons of the herald of God, and I fly to avenge the death of Hosein!" "And in whose protection do you leave our child?" "I commend him to the protection of Allah!" So saying he departed.

Another called for a lance and steed; told his daughter that he fled from crime to penitence; took a hurried leave of his family, and galloped to the camp of Solyman.

Still, when the army of Penitents was mustered on the following day, it did not exceed four thousand. Solyman flattered himself, however, that reinforcements, promised him from various quarters, would join him when on the march. He harangued his scanty host, roused their ardor, and marched them to the place of Hosein's murder, where they passed a day and night in prayer and lamentation. They then resumed their march. Their intention was to depose both Caliphs, Merwân and Abdallah; to overthrow the family of Ommiah,

and restore the throne to the house of Ali; but their first object was vengeance on Obeid'allah, the son of Ziyad, to whom they chiefly ascribed the murder of Hosein. The aged Solyman led his little army of enthusiasts through Syria, continually disappointed of recruits, but unabated in their expectation of aid from heaven, until they were encountered by Obeid'allah with an army of twenty thousand horsemen, and cut in pieces.

In the midst of these internal feuds and dissensions, a spark of the old Saracen spirit was aroused by the news of disastrous reverses in Northern Africa. We have recorded, in a former chapter, the heroic but diastrous end of Acbah, on the plains of Numidia, where he and his little army were massacred by a Berber host led on by Aben Cahina. That Moorish chieftain, while flushed with victory, had been defeated by Zohair before the walls of Caerwan, and the spirits of the Moslems had once more revived; especially on the arrival of reinforcements sent by Abd'alaziz from Egypt. A sad reverse, however, again took place. A large force of imperialists, veteran and well armed soldiers from Constantinople, were landed on the African coast to take advantage of the domestic troubles of the Moslems, and drive them from their African possessions. Being joined

by the light troops of Barbary, they attacked Zohair in open field. He fought long and desperately, but being deserted by the Egyptian reinforcements, and overpowered by numbers, was compelled to retreat to Barca, while the conquering foe marched on to Caerwan, captured that city, and made themselves masters of the surrounding country.

It was the tidings of this disastrous reverse, and of the loss of the great outpost of Moslem conquest in Northern Africa, that roused the Saracen spirit from its domestic feuds. Abd' almâlec, the eldest son of the Caliph Merwân, who had already served in Africa, was sent with an army to assist Zohair. He met that general in Barca, where he was again collecting an army. They united their forces; retraced the westward route of victory, defeated the enemy in every action, and replaced the standard of the faith on the walls of Caerwan. Having thus wiped out the recent disgraces, Abd'almâlec left Zohair in command of that region, and returned covered with glory to sustain his aged father in the caliphate at Damascus.

The latter days of Merwân had now arrived. He had been intriguing and faithless in his youth; he was equally so in his age. In his stipulations on receiving the caliphate, he had

promised the succession to Khaled, the son of Yezid ; he had since promised it to his nephew Amru, who had fought his battles and confirmed his power ; in his latter days he caused his own son, Abd'almâlec, fresh from African exploits, to be proclaimed his successor, and allegiance to be sworn to him. Khaled, his step-son, reproached him with his breach of faith ; in the heat of reply, Merwân called the youth by an opprobrious epithet; which brought in question the chastity of his mother. This unlucky word is said to have caused the sudden death of Merwân. His wife, the mother of Khaled, is charged with having given him poison ; others say that she threw a pillow on his face while he slept, and sat on it until he was suffocated. He died in the sixty-fifth year of the Hegira, A.D. 684, after a brief reign of not quite a year.

Chapter XI.

Inauguration of Abd'almâlec, the Eleventh Caliph—Story of Al Moktâr, the Avenger.

ON the death of Merwân, his son Abd'almâlec was inaugurated Caliph at Damascus, and acknowledged throughout Syria and Egypt, as well as in the newly-conquered parts of Africa. He was in the full vigor of life, being about forty years of age; his achievements in Africa testify his enterprise, activity, and valor, and he was distinguished for wisdom and learning. From the time of his father's inauguration he had been looking forward to the probability of becoming his successor, and ambition of sway had taken the place of the military ardor of his early youth. When the intelligence of his father's death reached him, he was sitting cross-legged, in oriental fashion, with the Koran open on his knee. He immediately closed the sacred volume and rising exclaimed, "Fare thee well, I am called to other matters."

The accession to sovereign power is said to have wrought a change in his character. He had always been somewhat superstitious; he now became attentive to signs, omens, and dreams, and grew so sordid and covetous, that the Arabs, in their propensity to give characteristic and satirical surnames, used to call him Rafhol Hejer, that is to say, Sweat-Stone; equivalent to our vulgar epithet of skin-flint.

Abdallah Ibn Zobeir was still acknowledged as Caliph by a great portion of the Moslem dominions, and held his seat of government at Mecca; this gave him great influence over the true believers, who resorted in pilgrimage to the Caaba. Abd'almâlec determined to establish a rival place of pilgrimage within his own dominions. For this purpose he chose the temple of Jerusalem, sacred in the eyes of the Moslems, as connected with the acts and revelations of Moses, of Jesus, and of Mahomet, and as being surrounded by the tombs of the prophets. He caused this sacred edifice to be enlarged so as to include within its walls the steps upon which the Caliph Omar prayed on the surrender of that city. It was thus converted into a mosque, and the venerable and sanctified stone called Jacob's pillow, on which the patriarch is said to have had his dream,

was presented for the kisses of pilgrims, in like manner as the black stone of the Caaba.

There was at this time a general of bold, if not ferocious character, who played a sort of independent part in the troubles and commotions of the Moslem empire. He was the son of Abu Obeidah, and was sometimes called Al Thakifi, from his native city Thayef, but won for himself the more universal appellation of Al Moktâr, or the Avenger. The first notice we find of him is during the short reign of Hassan, the son of Ali, being zealously devoted to the family of that Caliph. We next find him at Cufa, harboring and assisting Muslem, the emissary of Hosein and secretly fomenting the conspiracy in favor of the latter. When the emir, Obeid'allah came to Cufa, he was told of the secret practices of Al Moktâr, and questioned him on the subject. Receiving a delusive reply, he smote him over the face with his staff and struck out one of his eyes. He then cast him into prison, where he lay until the massacre of Hosein. Intercessions were made in his favor with the Caliph Yezid, who ordered his release. The emir executed the order, but gave Al Moktâr notice, that if, after the expiration of three days, he were found within his jurisdiction, his life should be forfeit.

Al Moktâr departed, uttering threats and maledictions. One of his friends who met him, inquired concerning the loss of his eye. "It was the act of that son of a wanton, Obeid'allah," said he, bitterly, "but may Allah confound me if I do not one day cut him in pieces." Blood revenge for the death of Hosein became now his ruling thought. "May Allah forsake me," he would say, "if I do not kill as many in vengeance of that massacre, as were destroyed to avenge the blood of John, the son of Zacharias, on whom be peace!"

He now repaired to Mecca, and presented himself before Abdallah Ibn Zobeir, who had recently been inaugurated; but he would not take the oath of allegiance until the Caliph had declared his disposition to revenge the murder of Hosein. "Never," said he, "will the affairs of Abdallah prosper, until I am at the head of his army taking revenge for that murder."

Al Moktâr fought valiantly in defence of the sacred city while besieged; but when the siege was raised in consequence of the death of Yezid, and Abdallah became generally acknowledged, he found the Caliph growing cold towards him, or towards the constant purpose of his thoughts; he left him, therefore, and

set out for Cufa, visiting all the mosques on the way, haranguing the people on the subject of the death of Hosein, and declaring himself his avenger.

On arriving at Cufa, he found his self-appointed office of avenger likely to be forestalled by the veteran Solyman, who was about to depart on his mad enterprise with his crazy Penitents. Calling together the sectaries of Ali, he produced credentials from Mahomet, the brother of Hosein, which gained for him their confidence; and then represented to them the rashness and futility of the proposed expedition; and to his opposition may be ascribed the diminished number of volunteers that assembled at the call of Solyman.

While thus occupied he was arrested on a charge of plotting an insurrection with a view to seize upon the province, and was thrown into the same prison in which he had been confined by Obeid'allah. During his confinement he kept up a correspondence with the sectaries of Ali by letters conveyed in the lining of a cap. On the death of the Caliph Merwân he was released from prison, and found himself head of the Alians, or powerful sect of Ali; who even offered their adhesion to him as Caliph, on condition that he would govern according to the Koran, and the Sonna

or traditions, and would destroy the murderers of Hosein and his family.

Al Moktâr entered heartily upon the latter part of his duties, and soon established his claim to the title of Avenger. The first on whom he wreaked his vengeance was the ferocious Shamar, who had distinguished himself in the massacre of Hosein. Him he overcame and slew. The next was Caulah, who cut off the head of Hosein and conveyed it to the emir Obeid'allah. Him he beleaguered in his dwelling, and killed, and gave his body to the flames. His next victim was Amar Ibn Saad, the commander of the army that surrounded Hosein; with him he slew his son; and sent both of their heads to Mahomet, the brother of Hosein. He then seized Adi Ibn Hathem, who had stripped the body of Hosein while the limbs were yet quivering with life. Him he handed over to some of the sect of Ali, who stripped him, set him up as a target, and discharged arrows at him until they stood out from his body like the quills of a porcupine. In this way Al Moktâr went on, searching out the murderers of Hosein wherever they were to be found, and inflicting on them a diversity of deaths.

Sustained by his Alians, or sect of Ali, he now maintained a military sway in Cufa, and

held, in fact, a sovereign authority over Babylonia; he felt, however, that his situation was precarious; an army out of Syria, sent by Abd'almâlec, was threatening him on one side; and Musab, brother of the Caliph Abdallah, was in great force at Bassora, menacing him on the other. He now had recourse to stratagems to sustain his power, and accomplish his great scheme of vengeance. He made overtures to Abdallah, offering to join him with his forces. The wary Caliph suspected his sincerity, and required, as proofs of it, the oath of allegiance from himself and his people, and a detachment to proceed against the army of Abd'almâlec.

Al Moktâr promptly sent off an officer, named Serjabil, with three thousand men, with orders to proceed to Medina. Abdallah, still wary and suspicious, despatched a shrewd general, Abbas Ibn Sahel, with a competent force to meet Serjabil and sound his intentions, and if he were convinced there was lurking treachery, to act accordingly.

Abbas and Serjabil encountered at the head of their troops on the highway to Medina. They had an amicable conference, in which Abbas thought he discovered sufficient proof of perfidy. He took measures accordingly. Finding the little army of Serjabil almost

famished for lack of provisions, he killed a great number of fat sheep and distributed them among the hungry troops. A scene of hurry and glad confusion immediately took place. Some scattered themselves about the neighborhood in search of fuel; some were cooking, some feasting. In this unguarded moment Abbas set upon them with his troops, slew Serjabil, and nearly four hundred of his men; but gave quarter to the rest, most of whom enlisted under his standard.

Al Moktâr, finding that his good faith was doubted by Abdallah, wrote privately to Mahomet, brother of Hosein, who was permitted by the Caliph to reside in Mecca, where he led a quiet, inoffensive life, offering to bring a powerful army to his assistance if he would take up arms. Mahomet sent a verbal reply, assuring Al Moktâr of his belief in the sincerity of his offers; but declining all appeal to arms, saying he was resolved to bear his lot with patience, and leave the event to God. As the messenger was departing he gave him a parting word: "Bid Al Moktâr fear God and abstain from shedding blood."

The pious resignation and passive life of Mahomet were of no avail. The suspicious eye of Abdallah was fixed upon him. The Cufians of the sect of Ali, and devotees to the

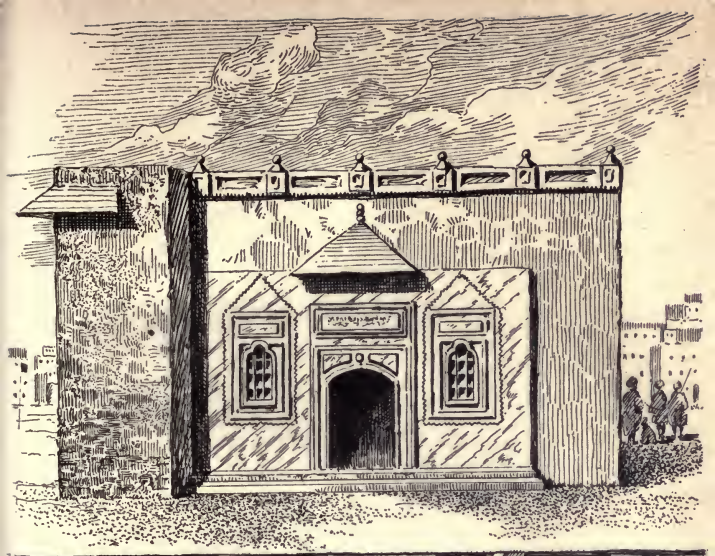
memory of Hosein, who yielded allegiance to neither of the rival Caliphs, were still permitted to make their pilgrimages to the Caaba, and when in Mecca, did not fail to do honor to Mahomet Ibn Ali and his family. The secret messages of Al Moktâr to Mahomet were likewise known. The Caliph Abdallah, suspecting a conspiracy, caused Mahomet and his family, and seventeen of the principal pilgrims from Cufa, to be arrested, and confined in the edifice by the sacred well Zem Zem, threatening them with death, unless by a certain time, they gave the pledge of allegiance.

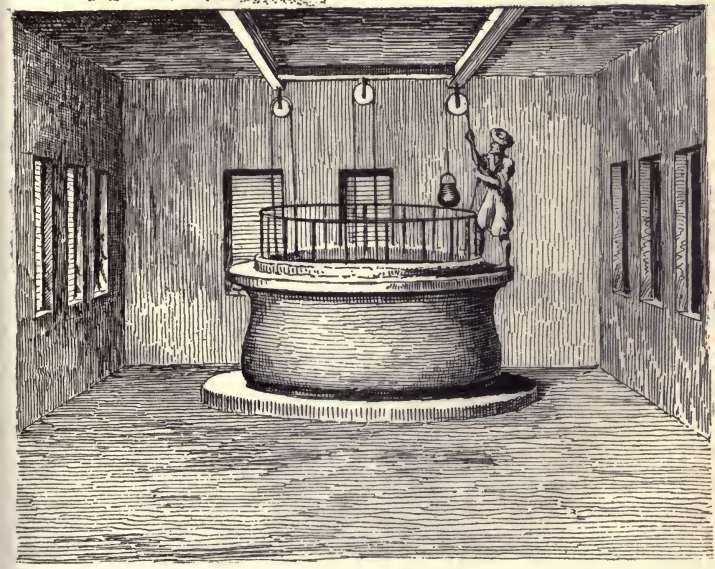
From their prison they contrived to send a letter to Al Moktâr, apprising him of their perilous condition. He assembled the Alians, or sect of Ali, at Cufa, and read the letter. "This comes," said he, "from Mahomet, the son of Ali and brother of Hosein. He and his family, the purest of the house of your prophet, are shut up like sheep destined for the slaughter. Will you desert them in their extremity, and leave them to be massacred as you did the martyr Hosein and his family?"

The appeal was effectual; the Alians cried out to be led to Mecca. Al Moktâr marshalled out seven hundred and fifty men, bold riders, hard fighters, well armed and fleetly mounted, arranged them in small troops to follow each

The Well of Zem Zem.

From "The Travels of Ali Bey Abassi."





other at considerable intervals, troop after troop, like the waves of the sea; the leader of the first troop, composed of a hundred and fifty men, was Abu Abdallah Aljodali. He set off first; the others followed at sufficient distance to be out of sight, but all spurred forward, for no time was to be lost.

Abu Abdallah was the first to enter Mecca. His small troop awakened no alarm. He made his way to the well of Zem Zem crying "Vengeance for Hosein!" drove off the guard and broke open the prison-house, whence he liberated Mahomet Ibn Ali and his family.

The tumult brought the Caliph and his guard. Abu Abdallah would have given them battle, but Mahomet interfered, and represented that it was impious to fight within the precincts of the Caaba. The Caliph, seeing the small force that was with Abdallah, would on his part have proceeded to violence, when lo, the second troop of hard riders spurred up; then the third, and presently all the rest; shouting "Allah Achbar!" and "Vengeance for Hosein!"

The Caliph, taken by surprise, lost all presence of mind. He knew the popularity of Mahomet Ibn Ali and his family, and dreaded an insurrection. Abu Abdallah in the moment of triumph would have put him to death, but

his hand was stayed by the pious and humane Mahomet. The matter was peaceably adjusted. The Caliph was left unmolested; Mahomet distributed among his friends and adherents a great sum of money, which had been sent to him by Al Moktâr, and then with his family departed in safety to Mecca.

Al Moktâr had now to look to his safety at home; his old enemy Obeid'allah, former emir of Cufa, was pressing forward at the head of an army of the Caliph Abd'almâlec, to recover that city, holding out to his troops a promise of three days' sack and pillage. Al Moktâr called on the inhabitants to take arms against their former tyrant and the murderer of Hosein. A body of troops sallied forth headed by Ibrahim, the son of Alashtar. To give a mysterious sanctity to the expedition, Al Moktâr caused a kind of throne covered with a veil to be placed on a mule, and led forth with the army, to be to them what the ark was to the children of Israel, a sacred safeguard. On going into battle, the following prayer was to be offered up at it: "O God! keep us in obedience to thee; and help us in our need." To which all the people were to respond, "Amen!"

The army of Ibrahim encountered the host of Obeid'allah on the plains, at some distance

from Cufa. They rushed forward with a holy enthusiasm inspired by the presence of their ark: "Vengeance for Hosein!" was their cry, and it smote upon the heart of Obeid'allah. The battle was fierce and bloody; the Syrian force, though greatly superior, was completely routed; Obeid'allah was killed, fighting with desperate valor, and more of his soldiers were drowned in the flight than were slaughtered in the field. This signal victory was attributed, in a great measure, to the presence of the ark or veiled throne, which thenceforward was regarded almost with idolatry.

Ibrahim caused the body of Obeid'allah to be burnt to ashes, and sent his head to Al Moktâr. The gloomy heart of the Avenger throbbed with exultation, as he beheld this relic of the man who had oppressed, insulted, and mutilated him; he recollected the blow over the face which had deprived him of an eye, and smote the gory head of Obeid'allah, even as he had been smitten.

Thus, says the royal and pious historian Abulfeda, did Allah make use of the deadly hate of Al Moktâr, to punish Obeid'allah, the son of Ziyad, for the martyrdom of Hosein.

The triumph of Al Moktâr was not of long duration. He ruled over a fickle people, and he ruled them with a rod of iron. He perse-

cuted all who were not, or whom he chose to consider as not, of the Hosein party, and he is charged with fomenting an insurrection of the slaves against the chief men of the city of Cufa. A combination was at length formed against him, and an invitation was sent to Musab Ibn Zobeir, who had been appointed emir of Bassora, by his brother, the Caliph Abdallah.

The invitation was borne by one Shebet, an enthusiast who made his entrance into Bassora on a mule with cropt ears and tail, his clothes rent, exclaiming with a loud voice, "Ya gautha! Help! help!" He delivered his message in a style suited to his garb, but accompanied it by letters from the chief men of Cufa, which stated their grievances in a more rational manner. Musab wrote instantly to Al Mohalleb, the emir of Persia, one of the ablest generals of the time, to come to his aid with men and money; and on his arrival, joined forces with him to attack the Avenger in his seat of power.

Al Moktâr did not wait to be besieged. He took the field with his accustomed daring, and gave battle beneath the walls of his capital. It was a bloody fight; the presence of the mysterious throne had its effect upon the superstitious minds of the Cufians, but Al Moktâr

had become hateful from his tyranny, and many of the first people were disaffected to him. His army was routed ; he retreated into the royal citadel of Cufa, and defended it bravely and skilfully, until he received a mortal wound. Their chief being killed, the garrison surrendered at discretion, and Musab put every man to the sword, to the number of seven thousand.

Thus fell Al Moktâr Ibn Abu Obeidah, in his sixty-seventh year, after having defeated the ablest generals of three Caliphs, and by the sole power of his sword made himself the independent ruler of all Babylonia. He is said never to have pardoned an enemy : to have persecuted with inveterate hate all who were hostile to the family of Ali, and in vengeance of the massacre of Hosein, to have shed the blood of nearly fifty thousand men, exclusive of those who were slain in battle. Well did he merit the title of the Avenger.

Chapter XIII.

Musab Ibn Zobeir Takes Possession of Babylonia—Usurpation of Amru Ibn Saad—His Death—Expedition of Abd'almâlec against Musab—The Result—Omens—Their Effect upon Abd'almâlec—Exploits of Al Mohalleb.

THE death of Al Moktâr threw the province of Babylonia, with its strong capital, Cufa, into the hands of Musab Ibn Zobeir, brother to the Caliph Abdallah. Musab was well calculated to win the favor of the people. He was in the flower of his days, being but thirty-six years of age, comely in person, engaging in manners, generous in spirit, and of consummate bravery, though not much versed in warfare. He had been an intimate friend of Abd'almâlec before the latter was made Caliph, but he was brother to the rival Caliph, and connected by marriage with families in deadly opposition to the house of Ommiah. Abd'almâlec, there-

fore, regarded him as a formidable foe, and warned by the disasters of his army under Obeid'allah, resolved now to set out at the head of a second expedition in person, designed for the invasion of Babylonia.

In setting forth on this enterprise, he confided the government of Damascus to his cousin, Amru Ibn Saad : he did this in consideration of the military skill of Amru, though secretly there was a long nourished hate between them. The origin of this hatred shows the simplicity of Saracen manners in those days. When boys, Abd'almâlec and Amru were often under the care of an old beldame of their family, who used to prepare their meals, and produce quarrels between them in the allotment of their portions. These childish disputes became fierce quarrels and broils as they grew up together and were rivals in their youthful games and exercises. In manhood they ripened into deadly jealousy and envy, as they became conquering generals ; but the elevation of Abd'almâlec to the caliphate, sank deep into the heart of Amru, as a flagrant wrong ; the succession having been promised to him by his uncle, the late Caliph Merwân, as a reward for having subjugated Egypt. As soon, therefore, as Abd'almâlec had departed from Damascus, Amru, not con-

tent with holding the government of the city, aspired to the sovereignty of Syria, as his rightful dominion.

Abd'almâlec heard of the usurpation while on the march, returned rapidly in his steps, and a bloody conflict ensued between the forces of the rival cousins in the streets of Damascus. The women rushed between them; held up their children and implored the combatants to desist from this unnatural warfare. Amru laid down his arms, and articles of reconciliation were drawn up and signed by the cousins.

Abd'almâlec proved faithless to his engagements. Getting Amru into his power by an artful stratagem, he struck off his head; put to death the principal persons who had supported him in his usurpation, and banished his family. As the exiles were about to depart, he demanded of the widow of Amru the written articles of pacification which he had exchanged with her husband. She replied that she had folded them up in his winding sheet, to be at hand at the final day of judgment.

Abd'almâlec now resumed his march for Babylonia. He had sent agents before him to tamper with the fidelity of the principal persons. One of these, Ibrahim Ibn Alashtar, he had offered to make emir if he would serve

his cause. Ibrahim, who was of incorruptible integrity, showed the letter to Musab, warned him that similar attempts must have been made to sap the fidelity of other persons of importance, and advised him to use the scimetar freely wherever he suspected disaffection; but Musab was too just and merciful to act thus upon mere suspicion. The event showed that Ibrahim understood the fickle and perfidious nature of the people of Irak.

A battle took place on the margin of the desert, not far from Palmyra. It commenced with a gallant charge of cavalry, headed by Ibrahim Ibn Alashtar, which broke the ranks of the Syrians and made great havoc. Abd'-almâlec came up with a reinforcement, and rallied his scattered troops. In making a second charge, however, Ibrahim was slain, and now the perfidy of the Cufians became apparent. Musab's general of horse wheeled round and spurred ignominiously from the field; others of the leaders refused to advance. Musab called loudly for Ibrahim; but seeing his lifeless body on the ground, "Alas!" he exclaimed, "there is no Ibrahim for me this day."

Turning to his son Isa, a mere stripling, yet who had fought with manly valor by his side, "Fly, my son," cried he; "fly to thy uncle

Abdallah at Mecca ; tell him of my fate, and of the perfidy of the men of Irak." Isa, who inherited the undaunted spirit of the family of Zobeir, refused to leave his father. "Let us retreat," said he, "to Bassora, where you will still find friends, and may thence make good your return to Mecca."

"No, my son!" replied Musab, "never shall it be said among the men of Koreish, that I fled the field of battle, or entered the temple of Mecca a vanquished general!"

During an interval of the battle, Abd'almâlec sent Musab an offer of his life. His reply was, he had come to conquer or to die. The conflict was soon at an end. The troops who adhered to Musab were cut to pieces, his son Isa was slain by his side, and he himself, after being repeatedly wounded with arrows, was stabbed to the heart and his head struck off.

When Abd'almâlec entered Cufa in triumph, the fickle inhabitants thronged to welcome him and take the oath of allegiance, and he found himself in quiet possession of both Babylonia and Persian Irak. He distributed great sums of money to win the light affections of the populace and gave a sumptuous banquet in the citadel, to which all were welcome.

In the height of the banquet, when all was

revelry, a thought passed through the mind of the Caliph, as to the transient duration of all human grandeur. "Alas!" he ejaculated, "how sweetly we might live, if a shadow would but last!" The same vein of melancholy continued when the banquet was over, and he walked about the castle with an old gray-headed inhabitant, listening to his account of its antiquities and traditions. Every reply of the old man to his questions about things or persons, began with the words, "This was,—That was,—He was."

"Alas!" sighed the Caliph, repeating a verse from an Arabian poet, "everything new soon runneth to decay, and of every one that is, it is soon said, He was!"

While thus conversing, the head of Musab was brought to him, and he ordered a thousand dinars of gold to the soldier who brought it, but he refused the reward. "I slew him," he said, "not for money, but to avenge a private wrong." The old chronicler of the castle now broke forth on the wonderful succession of events. "I am fourscore and ten years old," said he, "and have outlived many generations. In this very castle I have seen the head of Hosein presented to Obeid'allah, the son of Ziyad; then the head of Obeid'allah to Al Moktâr; then the head of Al Moktâr to

Musab, and now that of Musab to yourself." The Caliph was superstitious, and the words of the old man sounded ominously as the presage of a brief career to himself. He determined that his own head should not meet with similar fate within that castle's walls, and gave orders to raze the noble citadel of Cufa to the foundation.

Abd'almâlec now appointed his brother Besher Ibn Merwân to the government of Babylonia; and as he was extremely young, he gave him, as chief counsellor, or vizier, a veteran named Musa Ibn Nosseyr, who had long enjoyed the confidence of the family of Merwân, as had his father before him. It is said by some that his father Nosseyr was a liberated slave of the Caliph's brother Abd'alaziz, and employed by him in high functions. So great was the confidence of the Caliph in Musa, that he intrusted him with all the military rolls of the province, and signified to him that in future the responsibility would rest upon him. On taking possession of his government, Besher delivered his seal of office into the hands of Musa, and intrusted him with the entire management of affairs. This Musa, it will be found, rose afterwards to great renown.

The Caliph also appointed Khaled Ibn Abdallah to the command at Bassora, after which

he returned to his capital of Damascus. The province of Babylonia, however, was not destined to remain long at peace. There was at this time a powerful Moslem sect in Persia, a branch of the Motalazites, called Azarakites, from the name of their founder, Ibn Al Azarak, but known also by the name of Separatists. They were enemies of all regular government, and fomenters of sedition and rebellion. During the sway of the unfortunate Musab, they had given him great trouble by insurrections in various parts of the country, accompanied by atrocious cruelties. They had been kept in check, however, by Mohalleb, the lieutenant of Musab, and one of the ablest generals of the age, who was incessantly on the alert at the head of the army, and never allowed their insurrections to come to any head.

Mohalleb was on a distant command at the time of the invasion and conquest. As soon as he heard of the defeat and death of Musab, and the change in the government of Irak, he hastened to Bassora to acknowledge allegiance to Abd'almâlec. Khaled accepted his services, in the name of the Caliph, but instead of returning him to the post he had so well sustained at the head of the army, appointed him supervisor or collector of tributes, and gave the

command of the forces to his own brother, Abd'alaziz. The change was unfortunate. The Azarakites had already taken breath, and acquired strength during the temporary absence of their old adversary, Mohalleb; but as soon as they heard he was no longer in command, they collected all their forces and made a rapid inroad into Irak.

Abd'alaziz advanced to meet them; but he was new to his own troops, being a native of Mecca, and he knew little of the character of the enemy. He was entirely routed, and his wife, a woman of great beauty, taken captive. A violent dispute arose among the captors as to the ransom of their prize, some valuing her at one hundred thousand dinars, until a furious zealot, indignant that her beauty should cause dissension among them, struck off her head.

The Caliph Abd'almâlec was deeply grieved when he heard of this defeat, and wrote to Khaled, emir of Bassora, reproving him for having taken the command of the army from Mohalleb, a man of penetrating judgment and hardened in war, and given it to Abd'alaziz, "a mere Arab of Mecca." He ordered him, therefore, to replace Mohalleb forthwith, and wrote also to his brother Besher, emir of Babylonia, to send the general reinforcements.

Once more Mohalleb proved his generalship, by defeating the Azarakites in a signal and bloody battle near the city of Ahwâz ; nor did he suffer them to rally, but pursued them over the borders and into the heart of the mountains, until his troops lost almost all their horses, and returned crowned with victory, but wayworn and almost famished.

The effect of all these internal wars was to diminish, for a time, the external terror of the Moslem name. The Greek emperor, during the recent troubles, had made successful incursions into Syria ; and Abd'almâlec, finding enemies enough among those of his own faith, had been fain to purchase a humiliating truce of the Christian potentate by an additional yearly tribute of fifty thousand ducats.

Chapter XIII.

Abd'almâlec Makes War upon his Rival Caliph in Mecca—Siege of the Sacred City—Death of Abdallah—Demolition and Reconstruction of the Caaba.

ABD'ALMALEC, by his recent victories, had made himself sovereign of all the eastern part of the Moslem dominions; he had protected himself also from the Christian emperor by a disgraceful augmentation of tribute; he now determined to carry a war against his rival, Abdallah, to the very gates of Mecca, and make himself sovereign of an undivided empire.

The general chosen for this important enterprise was Al Hejagi (or Hedjadgi) Ibn Yusef, who rose to renown as one of the ablest and most eloquent of men of that era. He set off from Damascus with but two thousand men, but was joined by Taric Ibn Amar with five thousand more. Abd'almâlec had made proclamations beforehand, promising protection and favor to such of the adherents of Abdallah

as should come under his allegiance, and he trusted that many of the inhabitants of Mecca would desert to the standard of Al Hejagi.

Abdallah sent forth troops of horse to waylay and check the advance of the army, but they were easily repulsed, and Al Hejagi arrived without much difficulty before the sacred city. Before proceeding to hostilities, he discharged arrows over the walls carrying letters, in which the inhabitants were assured that he came merely to release them from the tyranny of Abdallah; and were invited to accept the most favorable terms, and abandon a man who would fain die with the title of Caliph, though the ruins of Mecca should be his sepulchre.

The city was now assailed with battering-rams and catapultas; breaches were made in the walls; the houses within were shattered by great stones, or set on fire by flaming balls of pitch and naphtha.

A violent storm of thunder and lightning killed several of the besiegers, and brought them to a pause. "Allah is wreaking his anger upon us," said they, "for assailing his holy city." Al Hejagi rebuked their superstitious fears and compelled them to renew the attack, setting them an example by discharging a stone with his own hands.

On the following day there was another storm which did most injury to the garrison. "You perceive," said Al Hejagi, "the thunder strikes your enemies as well as yourselves."

The besieged held out valiantly, and repulsed every assault. Abdallah, though now aged and infirm, proved himself a worthy son of Zobeir. During the early part of the siege, he resided chiefly in the Caaba; that sacred edifice, therefore, became an object of attack; a part of it was battered down by stones, and it was set on fire repeatedly by the balls of naphtha. He therefore abandoned it, and retired to his own dwelling. He was sustained throughout all this time of peril by the presence and counsels of his mother, a woman of masculine spirit and unfailing energy, though ninety years of age. She was the granddaughter of Abu Beker, and proved herself worthy of her descent. She accompanied her son to the ramparts; caused refreshments to be distributed among the fighting men; was consulted in every emergency, and present in every danger.

The siege continued with unremitting strictness; many of Abdallah's most devoted friends were killed; others became disheartened; nearly ten thousand of the inhabitants deserted to the enemy; even two of the

Caliph's sons, Hamza and Koheib, forsook him, and made terms for themselves with the besiegers.

In this forlorn state, his means of defence almost exhausted, and those who ought to have been most faithful deserting him, Abdallah was tempted by an offer of his own terms on condition of surrender.

He turned to his aged mother for advice. "Judge for yourself, my son," said the resolute descendant of Abu Beker. "If you feel that your cause is just, persevere. Your father Zobeir died for it, as did many of your friends. Do not bend your neck to the scorn of the haughty race of Ommiah. How much better an honorable death than a dishonored life for the brief term you have yet to live."

The Caliph kissed her venerable forehead. "Thy thoughts are my own," said he, "nor has any other motive than zeal for God induced me thus far to persevere. From this moment, consider thy son as dead, and refrain from immoderate lamentation." "My trust is in God," replied she, "and I shall have comfort in thee, my son, whether I go before or follow thee."

As she took a parting embrace, she felt a coat of mail under the outer garments of Abdallah, and told him to put it off, as unsuited

to a martyr prepared to die. "I have worn it," replied he, "that I might be the better able to defend thee, my mother." He added that he had little fear of death, but a horror of the insults and exposures to which his body might be subjected after death.

"A sheep once killed, my son, feels not the flaying." With these words she gave him to rouse his spirits, a cordial draught in which was a strong infusion of musk, and Abdallah went forth, a self-devoted martyr.

This last sally of the veteran Caliph struck terror and astonishment into the enemy. At the head of a handful of troops he repulsed them from the breach; drove them into the ditch, and slew an incredible number with his own hand; others, however, thronged up in their place; he fought until his followers were slain, his arrows expended, and he had no weapon but sword and lance. He now retreated, step by step, with his face to the foe, disputing every inch of ground, until he arrived in a narrow place where he could only be assailed in front. Here he made his last stand. His opponents, not daring to come within reach of his weapons, assailed him from a distance with darts and arrows, and when these missiles were expended, with bricks, and tiles and stones. A blow on the head from a stone made him totter, and

the blood streamed down his face and beard. His assailants gave a shout; but he recovered himself and uttered a verse of a poet, "The blood of our wounds falls on our instep, not on our heels"; implying that he had not turned his back upon the foe. At length he sank under repeated wounds and bruises, and the enemy closing upon him cut off his head. Thus died Abdallah, the son of Zobeir, in the seventy-third year of the Hegira, and the seventy-second year of his own age, after a stormy and disastrous reign of nine years.

Taric Ibn Amar, struck with admiration of his persevering valor, exclaimed, "Never did woman bear a braver son!" "How is this," cried Al Hejagi, "do you speak thus of an enemy of the Commander of the Faithful?" But Abd'almâlec, when the speech was reported to him, concurred in the praise of his fallen rival. "By Allah!" exclaimed he, "what Taric hath spoken is the truth." When the tidings of Abdallah's death were brought to his aged mother, she experienced a revulsion of nature which she had not known for fifty years, and died of hemorrhage.

Abdallah was said to unite the courage of the lion with the craftiness of the fox. He was free from any glaring vice, but reputed to be sordidly covetous and miserly: insomuch

that he wore the same garment for several years. It was a saying in Arabia, that he was the first example of a man being at the same time brave and covetous; but the spoils of foreign conquest were fast corrupting the chivalrous spirit of the Arab conquerors. He was equally renowned for piety, being, according to tradition, so fixed and immovable in prayer, that a pigeon once perched upon his head, mistaking him for a statue.

With the death of Abdallah ended the rival caliphate, and the conquering general received the oaths of allegiance of the Arabs for Abd'-almâlec. His conduct, however, toward the people of Mecca and Medina, was as cruel and oppressive as his military operations had been brilliant. He inflicted severe punishments for trivial offences; sometimes on mere suspicion, and marked many with stamps of lead upon the neck, to disgrace them in the public eye. His most popular act was the reconstruction of the dilapidated Caaba on the original form which it had borne before the era of the prophet.

For a time the people of Mecca and Medina groaned under his tyranny, and looked back with repining to the gentler sway of Abdallah; and it was a cause of general joy throughout those cities, when the following circumstances

caused him to be removed from their government and promoted to a distant command.

Though the death of Abdallah had rendered Abd'almâlec sole sovereign of the Moslem empire, the emir of Khorassan, Abdallah Ibn Hazem, who had been appointed by his rival, hesitated to give in his allegiance. His province, so distant and great in extent, might make him a dangerous rebel; Abd'almâlec, therefore, sent a messenger, claiming his oath of fealty, and proffering him, in reward, the government of Khorassan for seven years, with the enjoyment of all its revenues; at the same time, he sent him the head of the deceased Caliph, to intimate the fate he might expect should he prove refractory.

The emir, instead of being intimidated, was filled with horror, and swore never to acknowledge Abd'almâlec as Commander of the Faithful. He reverently washed and embalmed the head, folded it in fine linen, prayed over it, and sent it to the family of the deceased Caliph at Medina. Then summoning the messenger, he made him eat the epistle of Abd'almâlec in his presence, and dismissed him with the assurance that his sacred character of herald alone saved his head.

It was to go against this refractory but high-minded emir, that Al Hejagi was called off from

his command in Arabia. He entered Khorassan with a powerful army, defeated the emir in repeated battles, and at length slew him and reduced the province to obedience.

The vigor, activity, and indomitable courage displayed by Al Hejagi in these various services, pointed him out as the very man to take charge of the government of Babylonia, or Irak, recently vacated by the death of the Caliph's brother, Besher; and he was accordingly sent to break that refractory province into more thorough obedience.

The province of Babylonia, though formerly a part of the Persian empire, had never been really Persian in character. Governed by viceroys, it had partaken of the alien feeling of a colony; forming a frontier between Persia and Arabia, and its population made up from both countries, it was deficient in the virtues of either. The inhabitants had neither the simplicity and loyality of the Arabs of the desert, nor the refinement and cultivation of the Persians of the cities. Restless, turbulent, factious, they were ever ready to conspire against their rulers; to desert old faiths, and to adopt new sects and heresies. Before the conquest by the Moslems, when Irak was governed by a Persian satrap, and Syria by an imperial prefect, a spirit of rivalry and hostility existed be-

tween these frontier provinces; the same had revived during the division of the caliphate; and while Syria was zealous in its devotion to the house of Ommiah, Irak had espoused the cause of Ali. Even since the reunion and integrity of the caliphate, it still remained a restless, unsteady part of the Moslem empire; the embers of old seditions still lurked in its bosom, ready at any moment once more to burst forth into flame. We shall see how Al Hejagi fared in his government of that most combustible province.

Chapter XIV.

Administration of Al Hejagi as Emir of Babylonia.

AL HEJAGI, aware of the nature of the people over whom he was to rule, took possession of his government in military style. Riding into Cufa, at the head of four thousand horse, he spurred on to the mosque, alighted at the portal, and, ascending the pulpit, delivered an harangue to the multitude, that let them know the rigorous rule they were to expect. He had come, he said, "to make the wicked man bear his own burden, and wear his own shoe"; and, as he looked round on the densely crowded assemblage, he intimated he saw before him turbaned heads ripe for mowing, and beards which required to be moistened with blood.

His sermon was carried out in practice; he ruled with a rigorous hand, swearing he would execute justice in a style that should put to shame all who had preceded, and serve as an

example to all who might follow him. He was especially severe, and even cruel, towards all who had been in any way implicated in the assassination of the Caliph Othman. One person, against whom he came prepared to exercise the utmost severity, was the veteran Musa Ibn Nosseyr, who had officiated as prime minister to the deceased emir Besher. He had been accused of appropriating and squandering the taxes collected in the province, and the Caliph had lent a too ready ear to the accusation. Fortunately, the following letter, from a friend in Damascus, apprised Musa in time of his danger:

"Thy deposition is signed; orders have been despatched to Ali Hejagi to seize on thy person and inflict on thee the most severe punishment: so away! away! thy safety depends on the fleetness of thy horse. If thou succeed in placing thyself under the protection of Abd'alaziz Ibn Merwân, all will go well with thee."

Musa lost no time, but mounted his steed and fled to Damascus, where Abd'alaziz was then sojourning, having arrived with the tribute of Egypt. Abd'alaziz received with protecting kindness the veteran adherent of the family, and accompanied him before the Caliph.

"How darest thou show thy beard here?"

exclaimed Abd'almâlec. "Why should I hide it?" replied the veteran; "what have I done to offend the Commander of the Faithful?" "Thou hast disobeyed my orders, and squandered my treasures." "I did no such thing," replied Musa, firmly; "I have always acted like a faithful subject; my intentions have been pure; my actions true." "By Allah," cried the Caliph, "thou shalt make thy defalcation good fifty times over." The veteran was about to make an angry reply, but at a sign from Abd'alaziz he checked himself, and bowing his head, "Thy will be done," said he, "O Commander of the Faithful." He was fined fifty thousand dinars of gold; which, however, Abd'alaziz enabled him to pay; and, on his return to his government in Egypt, took his old favorite with him. How he further indemnified Musa for his maltreatment will be shown hereafter.

To resume the affairs of Al Hejagi in Irak. Having exercised the rod of government in Cufa, he proceeded to Bassora, where he was equally sharp with his tongue, and heavy with his hand. The consequence was, as usual, an insurrection. This suited his humor. He was promptly in the field; defeated the rebels in a pitched battle; sent the heads of eighteen of their leaders to the Caliph, and then re-

turned to the administration of affairs at Bassora. He afterwards sent two of his lieutenants to suppress a new movement among the Azarakite sectaries, who were defeated and driven out of the province.

In the 76th year of the Hegira, a conspiracy was formed against the life of Abd'almâlec, by two Karigite fanatics, named Shebib Ibn Zeid and Saleh Ibn Mari. Their conspiracy was discovered and defeated, but they made their escape and repaired to the town of Daras, in Mesopotamia, where they managed to get together adherents to the number of one hundred and twenty men. Saleh was smooth-tongued and seductive; having a melodious voice and a great command of figurative language. He completely fascinated and bewildered his companion Shebib, and their infatuated followers, mingling his inflammatory harangues with pious precepts and expositions of the Koran. In the end he was hailed Commander of the Faithful by the motley crew, and gravely accepted the office. His men were all armed, but most of them were on foot; he, therefore, led them to a neighboring village, where they seized upon the best horses in the name of Allah and the prophet, to whom they referred the owners for payment.

Mahomet, brother of Abd'almâlec, who was

at that time emir of Mesopotamia, was moved to laughter when he heard of this new Caliph and his handful of rabble followers; and ordered Adi, one of his officers, to take five hundred men and sweep them from the province.

Adi shook his head doubtfully. "One madman," said he, "is more dangerous than five soldiers in their senses."

"Take one thousand, then," said the emir; and with that number well armed and mounted Adi set out in quest of the fanatics. He found them and their pseudo Caliph living in free quarters on the fat of the land, and daily receiving recruits in straggling parties of two, and three, and four at a time, armed with such weapons as they could catch up in their haste. On the approach of Adi they prepared for battle, having full confidence that a legion of angels would fight on their side.

Adi held a parley, and endeavored to convince them of the absurdity of their proceedings, or to persuade them to carry their marauding enterprises elsewhere; but Saleh, assuming the tone of Caliph as well as sectarian, admonished Adi and his men to conform to his doctrines, and come into his allegiance. The conference ended while it was yet the morning hour. Adi still forbore to attack such a handful of misguided men, and paid dearly

for his forbearance. At noontide, when he and his men were engaged in the customary prayer, and their steeds were feeding, the enthusiast band charged suddenly upon them with the cry of Allah Achbar! Adi was slain in the onset, and his body was trampled under foot; his troops were scattered or dispersed, and his camp and horses, with a good supply of arms, became welcome booty to the victors.

The band of sectarians increased in numbers and in daring after this signal exploit. Al Hejagi sent five thousand veteran troops against them, under Al Hareth Alamdani. These came by surprise upon the two leaders, Saleh and Shebib, with a party of only ninety men, at the village on the Tigris not far from Mosul, the capital of Mesopotamia. The fanatic chiefs attacked the army with a kind of frantic courage, but Saleh, the mock Caliph, was instantly killed, with a score of his followers. Shebib was struck from his horse, but managed to keep together the remnant of his party; made good his retreat with them into Montbagi, a dismantled fortress, and swung to and secured the ponderous gate.

The victors kindled a great fire against the gate, and waited patiently until it should burn down, considering their prey secure.

As the night advanced, Shebib, who from

his desolate retreat watched anxiously for some chance of escape, perceived, by the light of the fire, that the greater part of the besiegers, fatigued by their march, were buried in deep sleep. He now exacted from his men an oath of implicit obedience, which they took between his hands. He then caused them to steep most of their clothing in a tank of water within the castle, after which, softly drawing the bolts of the flaming gate, they threw it down on the fire kindled against it; flung their wet garments on the burning bridge thus suddenly formed, and rushed forth, scimetar in hand.

Instead of contenting themselves with an escape, the crazy zealots charged into the very heart of the sleeping camp, and wounded the general before an alarm was given. The soldiers started awake in the midst of havoc and confusion; supposing themselves surprised by a numerous army, they fled in all directions, never ceasing their flight until they had taken refuge in Mosul or Jukhi, or some other walled city.

Shebib established himself amid the abundance of the deserted camp; scarce any of his men had been killed or wounded in this midnight slaughter; he considered himself therefore invincible; proclaimed himself Commander of the Faithful, and partisans crowded to his

standard. Strengthened by numbers, he led his fanatic horde against Cufa, and had the address and good fortune to make himself master of it, Al Hejagi, the emir, being absent at Bassora. He was soon joined by his wife Gazala; established himself as Caliph with some ceremonial, and doubtless his vagabond sway was more acceptable to the people of Cufa, than the iron rule of Al Hejagi.

The mock caliphate, however, was of brief duration. Al Hejagi, reinforced by troops from Syria, marched in person against Cufa. He was boldly met in the plains near that city by Shebib, at the head of four thousand men. The fanatics were defeated, and Gazala, the wife of the mock Caliph, who had accompanied her husband to the field, was slain. Shebib, with a remnant of his force cut his way through the Syrian army; crossed and recrossed the Tigris, and sought refuge and reinforcements in the interior of Persia. He soon returned into Irak, with a force inconsiderable in numbers, but formidable for enthusiasm and desperate valor. He was encountered at the bridge of Dojail al Awaz. Here a sudden and unexpected end was put to his fanatic career. His horse struck his forefeet on some loose stones on the margin of the bridge, and threw his rider into the stream. He rose twice

to the surface, and each time uttered a pious ejaculation. "What God decrees is just!" was the first exclamation. "The will of God be done!" was the second, and the waters closed over him. His followers cried with loud lamentations, "The Commander of the Faithful is no more!" and every man betook himself to flight. The water was dragged with a net, the body was found and decapitated, and the head sent to Al Hejagi, who transmitted it to the Caliph. The heart of this enthusiast was also taken out of his breast, and is said to have been as hard as stone. He was assuredly a man of extraordinary daring.

Arabian writers say that the manner of Shebib's death was predicted before his birth. His mother was a beautiful Christian captive, purchased at a public sale by Yezid Ibn Naim for his harem. Just before she gave birth to Shebib, she had a dream that a coal of fire proceeded from her, and, after enkindling a flame over the firmament, fell into the sea and was extinguished. This dream was interpreted that she would give birth to a man-child, who would prove a distinguished warrior, but would eventually be drowned. So strong was her belief in this omen, that when she heard, on one occasion, of his defeat and of his alleged death on the battle-field, she treated the tidings

as an idle rumor, saying it was by water only her son would die. At the time of Shebib's death he had just passed his fiftieth year.

The emir Al Hejagi was destined to have still further commotions in his turbulent and inconsistent province. A violent feud existed between him and Abda'lrahman Ibn Mohammed, a general subject to his orders. To put an end to it, or to relieve himself from the presence of an enemy, he sent him on an expedition to the frontiers against the Turks. Abda'lrahman set out on his march, but when fairly in the field, with a force at his command, conceived a project either of revenge or ambition.

Addressing his soldiers in a spirited harangue, he told them that their numbers were totally inadequate to the enterprise; that the object of Al Hejagi in sending him on such a dangerous service with such incompetent means, was to effect his defeat and ruin, and that they had been sent to be sacrificed with him.

The harangue produced the desired effect. The troops vowed devotion to Abda'lrahman and vengeance upon the emir. Without giving their passion time to cool, he led them back to put their threats in execution. Al Hejagi heard of the treason, and took the field to meet them, but probably was not well sec-

onded by the people of Babylonia, for he was defeated in a pitched battle. Aba'lrahman then marched to the city of Bassora ; the inhabitants welcomed him as their deliverer from a tyrant, and, captivated by his humane and engaging manners, hailed him as Caliph. Intoxicated by his success, he gravely assumed the title, and proceeded toward Cufa. Encountering Al Hejagi on the way, with a hastily levied army, he gave him another signal defeat, and then entered Cufa in triumph, amid the shouts of its giddy populace, who were delighted with any change that released them from the yoke of Al Hejagi.

Abda'lrahman was now acknowledged Caliph throughout the territories bordering on the Euphrates and the Tigris, a mighty empire in ancient days, and still important from its population, for he soon had on foot an army of one hundred thousand men.

Repeated defeat had but served to rouse the energy of Al Hejagi. He raised troops among such of the people of Irak as remained faithful to Abd'almâlec ; received reinforcements from the Caliph, and by dint of indefatigable exertions, was again enabled to take the field.

The two generals, animated by deadly hate encamped their armies at places not far apart. Here they remained between three and four

months, keeping vigilant eye upon each other, and engaged in incessant conflicts, though never venturing upon a pitched battle.

The object of Al Hejagi was to gain an advantage by his superior military skill, and he succeeded. By an artful manœuvre he cut off Abda'lrahman, with a body of five thousand men, from his main army; compelled him to retreat, and drove him to take refuge in a fortified town; where, being closely besieged, and having no hope of escape, he threw himself headlong from a lofty tower, rather than fall into the hands of his cruel enemy.

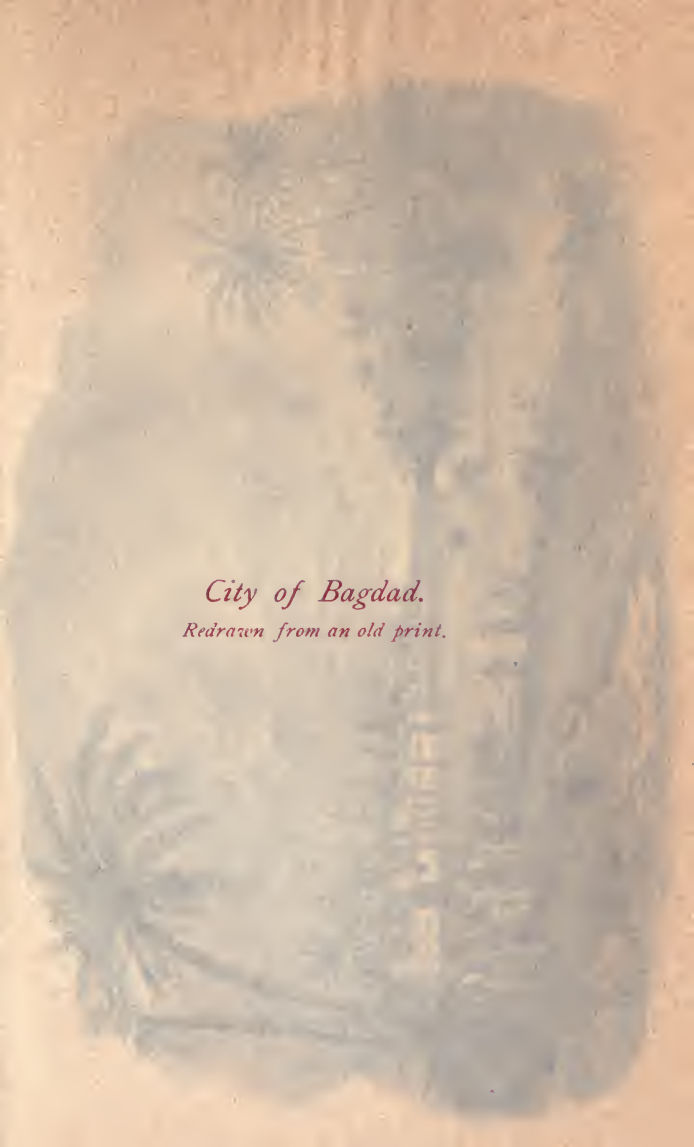
Thus terminated the rebellion of this second mock Caliph, and Al Hejagi, to secure the tranquillity of Irak, founded a strong city on the Tigris, called Al Wazab, or the Centre, from its lying at equal distance from Cufa, Bassora, Bagdad, and Ahwâz, about fifty leagues from each.

Al Hejagi, whom we shall have no further occasion to mention, continued emir of Irak until his death, which took place under the reign of the next Caliph, in the ninety-fifth year of the Hegira, and the fifty-fourth of his own age. He is said to have caused the death of one hundred and twenty thousand persons, independent of those who fell in battle, and that, at the time of his death, he left fifty thou-

sand confined in different prisons. Can we wonder that he was detested as a tyrant?

In his last illness, say the Arabian historians, he sent for a noted astrologer, and asked him whether any great general was about to end his days. The learned man consulted the stars, and replied that a great captain named Kotaib, or "The Dog," was at the point of death. "That," said the dying emir, "is the name my mother used to call me when a child." He inquired of the astrologer if he was assured of his prediction. The sage, proud of his art, declared that it was infallible. "Then," said the emir, "I will take you with me, that I may have the benefit of your skill in the other world." So saying, he caused his head to be struck off.

The tyranny of this general was relieved at times by displays of great magnificence and acts of generosity, if not clemency. He spread a thousand tables at a single banquet, and bestowed a million dirhems of silver at a single donation. On one occasion, an Arab, ignorant of his person, spoke of him, in his presence, as a cruel tyrant. "Do you know me?" said Al Hejagi, sternly. "I do not," replied the Arab. "I am Al Hejagi!" "That may be," replied the Arab, quickly, "but do you know me? I am of the family of Zobeir, who



City of Bagdad.

Redrawn from an old print.

[illegible] in different [illegible]. Can we [illegible] that he was deposed at a [illegible]?

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are fools in the full of the moon; and if you look upon the heavens you will see that this is my day." The emir laughed at his ready wit, and dismissed him with a present.

On another occasion, when separated from his party while hunting, he came to a spring where an Arab was feeding his camels, and demanded drink. The Arab bade him, rudely, to alight and help himself. It was during the rebellion of Abda'lrahman. After he had slaked his thirst, he demanded of the Arab whether he was for the Caliph Abd'almâlec. The Arab replied, "No; for the Caliph had sent the worst man in the world to govern the province." Just then a bird, passing overhead, uttered a croaking note. The Arab turned a quick eye upon the emir; "Who art thou?" cried he, with consternation. "Wherefore the question?" "Because I understand the language of birds, and he says that thou art chief of yon horsemen that I see approaching."

The emir smiled, and when his attendants came up, bade them to bring the camel-driver with them. On the next day, he sent for him, had meat set before him, and bade him eat. Before he complied, the Arab uttered a grace, "Allah grant that the end of this meal be as happy as the beginning."

The emir inquired if he recollected their conversation of yesterday. "Perfectly! but I entreat thee to forget it, for it was a secret which should be buried in oblivion."

"Here are two conditions for thy choice," said the emir; "recant what thou hast said and enter into my service, or abide the decision of the Caliph, to whom thy treasonable speech shall be repeated." "There is a third course," replied the Arab, "which is better than either. Send me to my own home, and let us be strangers to each other as heretofore."

The emir was amused by the spirit of the Arab, and dismissed him with a thousand dirhems of silver.

There were no further troubles in Irak during the lifetime of Al Hejagi, and even the fickle, turbulent and faithless people of Cufa became submissive and obedient. Abulfaragius says that this general died of eating dirt. It appears that he was subject to dyspepsia or indigestion, for which he used to eat Terra Lemnia, and other medicinal or absorbent earths. Whether he fell a victim to the malady or the medicine, is not clearly manifest.

Chapter XV.

Renunciation of Tribute to the Emperor—Battles in Northern Africa—The Prophet-Queen Cahina—Her Achievements and Faith.

THE seventy-second year of the Hegira saw the Moslem dominions at length free from rebellion and civil war, and united under one Caliph. Abd'almâlec now looked abroad, and was anxious to revive the foreign glories of Islam, which had declined during the late vicissitudes. His first movement was to throw off the galling tribute to the Greek emperor. This, under Moawyah I., had originally been three thousand dinars of gold, but had been augmented to three hundred and sixty-five thousand; being one thousand for every day in the Christian year. It was accompanied by three hundred and sixty-five female slaves and three hundred and sixty-five Arabian horses of the most generous race.

Not content with renouncing the payment

of tribute, Abd'almâlec sent Alid, one of his generals, on a ravaging expedition into the imperial dominions, availing himself of a disaffection evinced to the new emperor Leontius. Alid returned laden with spoils. The cities of Lazuca and Baruncium were likewise delivered up to the Moslems through the treachery of Sergius, a Christian general.

Abd'almâlec next sought to vindicate the glory of the Moslem arms along the northern coast of Africa. There, also, the imperialists had taken advantage of the troubles of the caliphate, to reverse the former successes of the Moslems, and to strengthen themselves along the sea-coast, of which their navy aided them to hold possession. Zohair, who had been left by Abd'almâlec in command of Barca, had fallen into an ambush, and been slain with many of his men, and the posts still held by the Moslems were chiefly in the interior.

In the seventy-seventh year of the Hegira, therefore, Abd'almâlec sent Hossán Ibn Anno'mán, at the head of forty thousand choice troops, to carry out the scheme of African conquest. That general pressed forward at once with his troops against the city of Carthage, which, though declined from its ancient might and glory, was still an important sea-port, fortified with lofty walls, haughty towers, and pow-

erful bulwarks, and had a numerous garrison of Greeks and other Christians. Hossán proceeded according to the old Arab mode; beleaguering it and reducing it by a long siege; he then assailed it by storm, scaled its lofty walls with ladders, and made himself master of the place. Many of the inhabitants fell by the edge of the sword; many escaped by sea to Sicily and Spain. The walls were then demolished; the city was given up to be plundered by the soldiery, the meanest of whom was enriched by booty. Particular mention is made among the spoils of victory of a great number of female captives of rare beauty.

The triumph of the Moslem host was suddenly interrupted. While they were revelling in the ravaged palaces of Carthage, a fleet appeared before the port; snapped the strong chain which guarded the entrance, and sailed into the harbor. It was a combined force of ships and troops from Constantinople and Sicily; reinforced by Goths from Spain; all under the command of the prefect John, a patrician general of great valor and experience.

Hossán felt himself unable to cope with such a force; he withdrew, however, in good order, and conducted his troops laden with spoils to Tripoli and Caerwân, and having

strongly posted them, he awaited reinforcements from the Caliph. These arrived in the course of time, by sea and land. Hossán again took the field; encountered the prefect John, not far from Utica, defeated him in a pitched battle, and drove him to embark the wrecks of his army, and make all sail for Constantinople.

Carthage was again assailed by the victors, and now its desolation was complete, for the vengeance of the Moslems gave that majestic city to the flames. A heap of ruins and the remains of a noble aqueduct are all the relics of a metropolis that once valiantly contended for dominion with Rome, the mistress of the world.

The imperial forces were now expelled from the coasts of Northern Africa, but the Moslems had not achieved the conquest of the country. A formidable enemy remained in the person of a native and heroic queen, who was revered by her subjects as a saint or prophetess. Her real name was Dhabbá, but she is generally known in history by the surname, given to her by the Moslems, of Cahina or the Sorceress. She has occasionally been confounded with her son Aben, or rather Ibn Cahina, of whom mention has been made in a previous chapter.

Under the sacred standard of this prophet-queen were combined the Moors of Mauritania and the Berbers of the mountains, and of the plains bordering on the interior deserts. Roving and independent tribes, which had formerly warred with each other, now yielded implicit obedience to one common leader, whom they regarded with religious reverence. The character of marabout or saint has ever had vast influence over the tribes of Africa. Under this heroic woman the combined host had been reduced to some degree of discipline, and inspired with patriotic ardor, and were now prepared to make a more effective struggle for their native land than they had yet done under their generals.

After repeated battles, the emir Hossán was compelled to retire with his veteran but diminished army to the frontiers of Egypt. The patriot queen was not satisfied with this partial success. Calling a council of war of the leaders and principal warriors of the different hordes: "This retreat of the enemy," said she, "is but temporary; they will return in greater force. What is it that attracts to our land these Arab spoilers? The wealth of our cities; the treasures of silver and gold digged from the bowels of the earth; the fruits of our gardens and orchards; the produce of our

fields. Let us demolish our cities; return these accursed treasures into the earth; fell our fruit trees; lay waste our fields, and spread a barrier of desolation between us and the country of these robbers!"

The words of the royal prophetess were received with fanatic enthusiasm by her barbarian troops; the greater part of whom, collected from the mountains and from distant parts, had little share in the property to be sacrificed. Walled towns were forthwith dismantled; majestic edifices were tumbled into ruins; groves of fruit trees were hewn down, and the whole country from Tangier to Tripoli was converted from a populace and fertile region into a howling and barren waste. A short time was sufficient to effect a desolation which centuries have not sufficed to remedy.

This sacrificial measure of Queen Cahina, however patriotic its intention, was fatal in the end to herself. The inhabitants of the cities and the plains, who had beheld their property laid waste by the infuriated zeal of their defenders, hailed the return of the Moslem invaders as though they had been the saviors of the land.

The Moslems, as Cahina predicted, returned with augmented forces; but when she took the field to oppose them, the ranks of her

army were thinned; the enthusiasm which had formerly animated them was at an end; they were routed, after a sanguinary battle, and the heroine fell into the hands of the enemy. Those who captured her spared her life, because she was a woman and a queen. When brought into the presence of Hossán she maintained her haughty and fierce demeanor. He proposed the usual conditions, of conversion or tribute. She refused both with scorn, and fell a victim to her patriotism and religious constancy, being beheaded in presence of the emir.

Hossán Ibn An-no'mán now repaired to Damascus, to give the Caliph an account of his battles and victories; bearing an immense amount of booty, and several signal trophies. The most important of the latter was a precious box, containing the embalmed head of the slaughtered Cahina. He was received with great distinction, loaded with honors, and the government of Barca was added to his military command.

This last honor proved fatal to Hossán. Abd'alaziz Ibn Merwân, the Caliph's brother, was at that time emir of Egypt, and considered the province of Barca a part of the territories under his government. He had, accordingly, appointed one of his officers to command it as

his lieutenant. He was extremely displeased and disconcerted, therefore, when he was told that Hossán had solicited and obtained the government of that province. Sending for the latter, as he passed through Egypt on his way to his post, he demanded whether it was true that in addition to his African command, he was really appointed governor of Barca. Being answered in the affirmative, he appeared still to doubt, whereupon Hossán produced the mandate of the Caliph. Finding it correct, Abd'alaziz urged him to resign the office. "Violence only," said Hossán, "shall wrest from me an honor conferred by the Commander of the Faithful." "Then I deprive thee of both governments," exclaimed the emir, in a passion, "and will appoint a better man in thy stead; and my brother will soon perceive the benefit he derives from the change." So saying, he tore the diploma in pieces.

It is added that, not content with depriving Hossán of his command, he despoiled him of all his property, and carried his persecution so far that the conqueror of Carthage, the slayer of the patriot queen, within a brief time after her death, and almost amid the very scenes of his triumphs, died of a broken heart. His cruel treatment of the heroic Cahina reconciles us to the injustice wreaked upon himself.

Chapter XVII.

Musa Ibn Nosseyr Made Emir of Northern Africa—His Campaigns against the Berbers.

THE general appointed by the Caliph's brother, Abd'alaziz Ibn Merwân, to the command in Northern Africa, was Musa Ibn Nosseyr, the same old adherent of the Merwân family that had been prime counsellor of the Caliph's brother Besher, when emir of Irak, and had escaped by dint of hoof from the clutches of Al Hejagi, when the latter was about to arrest him on a charge of squandering the public funds. Abd'alaziz, it will be remembered, assisted him to pay the fifty thousand dinars of gold, in which he was mulcted by the Caliph, and took him with him to Egypt; and it may have been with some view to self-reimbursement that the Egyptian emir now took the somewhat bold step of giving him the place assigned to Hossân by Abd'almâlec.

At the time of his appointment, Musa was sixty years of age. He was still active and vigorous; of noble presence, and concealed his age by tingeing his hair and beard with henna. He had three brave sons, who aided him in his campaigns, and in whom he took great pride. The eldest he had named Abd'alaziz, after his patron; he was brave and magnanimous, in the freshness of his youth, and his father's right hand in all his enterprises. Another of his sons he had called Merwân, the family name of Abd'alaziz and the Caliph.

Musa joined the army at its African encampment, and addressed his troops in frank and simple language. "I am a plain soldier like yourselves," said he; "whenever I act well, thank God, and endeavor to imitate me. When I do wrong, reprove me, that I may amend; for we are all sinners, and liable to err. If any one has at any time a complaint to make, let him state it frankly, and it shall be attended to. I have orders from the emir Abd'alaziz (to whom God be bountiful!) to pay you three times the amount of your arrears. Take it, and make good use of it." It is needless to say that the address, especially the last part, was received with acclamations.

While Musa was making his harangue, a sparrow fluttered into his bosom. Interpreting

it as a good omen, he called for a knife; cut off the bird's head; besmeared the bosom of his vest with the blood, and scattering the feathers in the air above his head—"Victory! victory!" he cried, "by the master of the Caaba, victory is ours!"

It is evident that Musa understood the character and foibles of his troops; he soon won their favor by his munificence, and still more by his affability; always accosting them with kind words and cheerful looks; carefully avoiding the error of those reserved commanders, shut up in the fancied dignity of station, who looked, he said, "as if God had tied a knot in their throats, so that they could not utter a word."

"A commander," he used to say, "ought to consult wise and experienced men in every undertaking; but when he has made up his mind, he should be firm and steady of purpose. He should be brave, adventurous, at times even rash, confiding in his good fortune, and endeavoring to do more than is expected of him. He should be doubly cautious after victory; doubly brave after defeat."

Musa found a part of Eastern Africa,* form-

* Northern Africa, extending from Egypt to the extremity of Mauritania, was subdivided into Eastern and Western Africa.

ing the present states of Tunis and Algiers, in complete confusion and insurrection. A Berber chief, Warkattâf by name, scoured night and day the land between Zaghwan and Caerwan. The Berbers had this advantage: if routed in the plains they took refuge in the mountains, which ran parallel to the coast, forming part of the great chain of Atlas; in the fastnesses of these mountains they felt themselves secure; but should they be driven out of these, they could plunge into the boundless deserts of the interior, and bid defiance to pursuit.

The energy of Musa rose with the difficulty of his enterprise. "Take courage," would he say to his troops, "God is on our side, and will enable us to cope with our enemies, however strong their holds. By Allah! I'll carry the war into yon haughty mountains, nor cease until we have seized upon their passes, surmounted their summits, and made ourselves masters of the country beyond."

His words were not an empty threat. Having vanquished the Berbers in the plains, he sent his sons Abd'alaziz and Merwân with troops in different directions, who attacked the enemy in their mountain-holds, and drove them beyond to the borders of the Southern desert. Warkattâf was slain with many of

his warriors, and Musa had the gratification of seeing his sons return triumphant from their different expeditions, bringing to the camp thousands of captives and immense booty. Indeed, the number of prisoners of both sexes taken in these campaigns is said to have amounted to three hundred thousand, of whom one-fifth, or sixty thousand, formed the Caliph's share.

Musa hastened to write an account of his victories to his patron Abd'alaziz Ibn Merwân, and as he knew covetousness to be the prime feeling of the emir, he sent him, at the same time, a great share of the spoils, with choice horses and female slaves of surpassing beauty.

The letter and the present came most opportunely. Abd'alaziz had just received a letter from his brother, the Caliph, rebuking him for having deposed Hossán, a brave, experienced, and fortunate officer, and given his office to Musa, a man who had formerly incurred the displeasure of the government; and he was ordered forthwith to restore Hossán to his command.

In reply, Abd'alaziz transmitted the news of the African victories. "I have just received from Musa," writes he, "the letter which I inclose, that thou mayest peruse it, and give thanks to God."

Other tidings came to the same purport, accompanied by a great amount of booty. The Caliph's feelings toward Musa immediately changed. He at once saw his fitness for the post he occupied, and confirmed the appointment of Abd'alaziz, making him emir of Africa. He, morever, granted yearly pensions of two hundred pieces of gold to himself, and one hundred to each of his sons, and directed him to select from among his soldiers five hundred of those who had most distinguished themselves in battle, or received most wounds, and give them each thirty pieces of gold. Lastly, he revoked the fine formerly imposed upon him of fifty thousand dinars of gold, and authorized him to reimburse himself out of the Caliph's share of the spoil.

This last sum Musa declined to receive for his own benefit, but publicly devoted it to the promotion of the faith and the good of its professors. Whenever a number of captives were put up for sale after a victory, he chose from among them those who were young, vigorous, intelligent, of noble origin, and who appeared disposed to be instructed in the religion of Islam. If they were converted, and proved to have sufficient talent, he gave them their liberty, and appointed them to commands in his army; if otherwise, he returned them to the

mass of captives, to be disposed of in the usual manner.

The fame of Musa's victories, and of the immense spoil collected by his troops, brought recruits to his standard from Syria and Egypt, and other distant parts; for rapine was becoming more and more the predominant passion of the Moslems. The army of Musa was no longer composed, like the primitive armies of the faith, merely of religious zealots. The campaigns in foreign countries, and the necessity, at distant points, of recruiting the diminished ranks from such sources as were at hand, had relaxed the ancient scruples, as to unity of faith, and men of different creeds now fought under the standard of Islam without being purified by conversion. The army was, therefore, a motley host of every country and kind; Arabs and Syrians, Persians and Copts, and nomadic Africans, arrayed in every kind of garb, and armed with every kind of weapon. Musa had succeeded in enlisting in his service many of the native tribes; a few of them were Christians, a greater proportion idolaters, but the greatest number professed Judaism. They readily amalgamated with the Arabs, having the same nomad habits, and the same love of war and rapine. They even traced their origin to the same Asiatic stock. According to their

traditions, five colonies, or tribes, came in ancient times from Sabæa, in Arabia the Happy, being expelled thence with their king Ifrique. From these descended the five most powerful Berber tribes, the Zenhangians, Muzamudas, Zenetes, Gomeres, and Hoares.

Musa artfully availed himself of these traditions; addressed the conquered Berbers as Aulad-arabi (sons of the Arabs), and so soothed their pride by this pretended consanguinity, that many readily embraced the Moslem faith, and thousands of the bravest men of Numidia enrolled themselves, of their own free will, in the armies of Islam.

Others, however, persisted in waging stubborn war with the invaders of their country, and among these, the most powerful and intrepid were the Zenetes. They were a free, independent and haughty race. Marmol, in his description of Africa, represents them as inhabiting various parts of the country. Some leading a roving life about the plains, living in tents like the Arabs; others having castles and strongholds in the mountains; others, very troglodytes, infesting the dens and caves of Mount Atlas, and others wandering on the borders of the Libyan desert.

The Gomeres were also a valiant and warlike tribe, inhabiting the mountains of the

lesser Atlas, in Mauritania, bordering the frontiers of Ceuta, while the Muzamudas lived in the more western part of that extreme province, where the great Atlas advances into the Atlantic Ocean.

In the eighty-third year of the Hegira, Musa made one of his severest campaigns against a combined force of these Berber tribes, collected under the banners of their several princes. They had posted themselves in one of the fastnesses of the Atlas mountains, to which the only approach was through different gorges and defiles. All these were defended with great obstinacy, but were carried, one after the other, after several days of severe fighting.

The armies at length found themselves in presence of each other, when a general conflict was unavoidable. As they were drawn out, regarding each other with menacing aspect, a Berber chief advanced, and challenged any one of the Moslem cavaliers to single combat. There was a delay in answering to the challenge; whereupon Musa turned to his son Merwân, who had charge of the banners, and told him to meet the Berber warrior. The youth handed his banner to his brother Abd'-alaziz, and stepped forward with alacrity. The Berber, a stark and seasoned warrior of the mountains, regarded with surprise and almost

scorn an opponent scarce arrived at manhood. "Return to the camp," cried he, "I would not deprive thine aged father of so comely a son." Merwân replied but with his weapon, assailing his adversary so vigorously, that he retreated and sprang upon his horse. He now urged his steed upon the youth, and made a thrust at him with a javelin, but Merwân seized the weapon with one hand, and with the other thrust his own javelin through the Berber's side, burying it in the flanks of the steed; so that both horse and rider were brought to the ground and slain.

The two armies now closed in a general struggle; it was bloody and desperate, but ended in the complete defeat of the Berbers. Kasleyah, their king, fell, fighting to the last. A vast number of captives were taken; among them were many beautiful maidens, daughters of princes and military chiefs. At the division of the spoil, Musa caused these high-born damsels to stand before him, and bade Merwân, his son, who had so recently distinguished himself, to choose among them. The youth chose one who was a daughter of the late king Kasleyah. She appears to have found solace for the loss of her father in the arms of a youthful husband; and ultimately made Merwân the father of two sons, Musa and Abd'almâlec.

Chapter XVII.

Naval Enterprises of Musa—Cruisings of his Son Abdolola—Death of Abd'almâlec.

THE bold and adventurous spirit of Musa Ibn Nosseyr was not content with victories on land. "Always endeavor to do more than is expected of thee," was his maxim, and he now aspired to achieve triumphs on the sea. He had ports within his province whence the Phœnicians and Carthaginians, in the days of their power, had fitted out maritime enterprises. Why should he not do the same?

The feelings of the Arab conquerors had widely changed in regard to naval expeditions. When Amru, the conqueror of Egypt, was at Alexandria, the Caliph Omar required of him a description of the Mediterranean. "It is a great pool," replied Amru, "which some foolhardy people furrow; looking like ants on logs of wood." The answer was enough for Omar,

who was always apprehensive that the Moslems would endanger their conquests by rashly-extended enterprises. He forbade all maritime expeditions. Perhaps he feared that the inexperience of the Arabs would expose them to defeat from the Franks and Romans, who were practiced navigators.

Moawyah, however, as we have shown, more confident of the Moslem capacity for nautical warfare, had launched the banner of Islam on the sea from the ancient ports of Tyre and Sidon, and had scoured the eastern waters of the Mediterranean. The Moslems now had armaments in various ports of Syria and Egypt, and warred with the Christians by sea as well as by land. Abd'almâlec had even ordered Musa's predecessor, Hossán, to erect an arsenal at Tunis; Musa now undertook to carry those orders into effect; to found dock-yards, and to build a fleet for his proposed enterprises.

At the outset he was surrounded by those sage doubters who are ever ready to chill the ardor of enterprise. They pronounced the scheme rash and impracticable. A gray-headed Berber, who had been converted to Islam, spoke in a different tone. "I am one hundred and twenty years old," said he, "and I well remember hearing my father say, that when the Lord of Carthage thought of building his

city, the people all, as at present, exclaimed against it as impracticable ; one alone rose and said, O king, put thy hand to the work and it will be achieved ; for the kings thy predecessors persevered and achieved everything they undertook, whatever might be the difficulty. And I say to thee, O emir, put thy hand to this work, and God will help thee?"

Musa did put his hand to the work, and so effectually, that by the conclusion of the eighty-fourth year of the Hegira, A.D. 703, the arsenal and dock-yard were complete, and furnished with maritime stores, and there was a numerous fleet in the port of Tunis.

About this time a Moslem fleet, sent by Abd'alaziz, the emir of Egypt, to make a ravaging descent on the coast of Sardinia entered the port of Susa, which is between Caerwan and Tunis. Musa sent provisions to the fleet, but wrote to the commander, Attá Ibn Rafi, cautioning him that the season was too late for his enterprise, and advising him to remain in port until more favorable time and weather.

Attá treated his letter with contempt, as the advice of a landsman : and having refitted his vessels put to sea. He landed on an island, called by the Arab writers, Salsalah, probably Linosa or Lampedosa ; made considerable

booty of gold, silver, and precious stones, and again set sail on his plundering cruise. A violent storm arose, his ships were dashed on the rocky coast of Africa, and he and nearly all his men were drowned.

Musa, hearing of the disaster, despatched his son Abd'alaziz, with a troop of horse to the scene of the shipwreck, to render all the assistance in his power; ordering that the vessels and crews which survived the storm, should repair to the port of Tunis; all which was done. At the place of the wreck Abd'alaziz found a heavy box cast up on the seashore; on being opened, its contents proved to be the share of spoil of one of the warriors of the fleet, who had perished in the sea.

The author of the tradition from which these facts are gleaned, adds, that one day he found an old man sitting on the sea-shore with a reed in his hand, which he attempted to take from him. A scuffle ensued; he wrested the reed from his hands, and struck him with it over his head; when lo, it broke, and out fell gold coins and pearls and precious stones. Whether the old man, thus hardly treated, was one of the wrecked cruisers, or a wrecker, seeking to profit by their misfortunes, is not specified in the tradition. The anecdote shows in what a random way the treasures of the earth

were in those days scattered about the world by the predatory hosts of Islam.

The surviving ships having been repaired, and added to those recently built at Tunis, and the season having become favorable, Musa, early in the eighty-fifth year of the Hegira, declared his intention to undertake, in person, a naval expedition. There was a universal eagerness among the troops to embark; Musa selected about a thousand of the choicest of his warriors, especially those of rank and family, so that the enterprise was afterwards designated The Expedition of the Nobles. He did not, however, accompany it as he had promised; he had done so merely to enlist his bravest men in the undertaking; the command was given to his son, Abdolola, to give him an opportunity to distinguish himself; for the reputation of his son was as dear to Musa as his own.

It was, however, a mere predatory cruise; a type of the ravaging piracies from the African ports in after ages. Abdolola coasted the fair island of Sicily with his ships, landed on the western side, and plundered a city which yielded such abundant spoil, that each of the thousand men embarked in the cruise received one hundred dinars of gold for his share. This done, the fleet returned to Africa.

Soon after the return of his ships, Musa re-

ceived news of the death of his patron Abd'-alaziz, which was followed soon after by tidings of the death of the Caliph. On hearing of the death of the latter, Musa immediately sent a messenger to Damascus to take the oath of allegiance, in his name, to the new Caliph; to inform him of the naval achievements of his son Abdolola, and to deliver to him his share of the immense booty gained. The effect, of course, was to secure his continuance in office as emir of Africa.

The malady which terminated in the death of Abd'almâlec is supposed to have been the dropsy. It was attended in its last stages with excessive thirst, which was aggravated by the prohibition of his physician that any water should be given to him, lest it should cause certain death. In the paroxysms of his malady, the expiring Caliph demanded water of his son Waled; it was withheld through filial piety. His daughter, Fatima, approached with a flagon, but Waled interfered and prevented her; whereupon the Caliph threatened him with disinheritance and his malediction. Fatima handed to him the flagon, he drained it at a draught, and almost instantly expired. He was about sixty years old at the time of his death, and had reigned about twenty years. Abulfeda gives him a character for learning,

courage, and foresight. He certainly showed ability and management in reuniting, under his sway, the dismembered portions of the Moslem empire, and quelling the various sects that rose in arms against him. His foresight with regard to his family also, was crowned with success, as four of his sons succeeded him, severally, in the caliphate.

He evinced an illiberal spirit of hostility to the memory of Ali, carrying it to such a degree that he would not permit the poet Ferazdak to celebrate in song the virtues of any of his descendants. Perhaps this may have gained for Abd'almâlec another by-name, with which some of the Arab writers have signalized his memory, calling him the "Father of Flies"; for so potent, say they, was his breath, that any fly which alighted on his lips died on the spot.

Chapter XVIII.

Inauguration of Waled, Twelfth Caliph—Revival of the Arts under his Reign—His Taste for Architecture—Erection of Mosques—Conquests of his Generals.

WALED, the eldest son of Abd'almâlec, was proclaimed Caliph at Damascus immediately on the death of his father, in the eighty-sixth year of the Hegira, and the year 705 of the Christian era. He was about thirty-eight years of age; and is described as being tall and robust, with a swarthy complexion, a face much pitted with the small-pox, and a broad flat nose; in other respects, which are left to our conjecture, he is said to have been of a good countenance. His habits were indolent and voluptuous, yet he was of a choleric temper, and somewhat inclined to cruelty.

During the reign of Waled the arts began to develop themselves under the Moslem sway;

finding a more genial home in the luxurious city of Damascus, than they had done in the holy cities of Mecca or Medina. Foreign conquests had brought the Arabs in contact with the Greeks and the Persians. Intercourse with them, and residence in their cities, had gradually refined away the gross habits of the desert; had awakened thirst for the sciences, and a relish for the elegancies of cultivated life. Little skilled in the principles of government, accustomed in their native deserts to the patriarchal rule of separate tribes, without any extended scheme of policy, or combined system of union, the Arabs, suddenly masters of a vast and continually widening empire, had to study the art of governing in the political institutions of the countries they conquered. Persia, the best organized monarchy in Asia, held out a model by which they were fain to profit; and in their system of emirs vested with the sway of distant and powerful provinces, but strictly responsible to the Caliph, we see a copy of the satraps or viceroys, the provincial depositaries of the power of the Khosrus.

Since Moawyah had moved the seat of the caliphate to Damascus, a change had come over the style of the Moslem court. It was no longer, as in the days of Omar, the conference

of a poorly clad Arab chieftain with his veteran warriors and gray-beard companions, seated on their mats in the corner of a mosque: the Moslem Caliph at Damascus had now his divan, in imitation of the Persian monarch; and his palace began to assume somewhat of oriental state and splendor.

In nothing had the Moslem conquerors showed more ignorance of affairs than in financial matters. The vast spoils acquired in their conquests, and the tribute and taxes imposed on subjugated countries, had for a time been treated like the chance booty caught up in predatory expeditions in the deserts. They were amassed in public treasuries without register or account, and shared and apportioned without judgment, and often without honesty. Hence continued frauds and peculations; hence those charges so readily brought and readily believed, against generals and governors in distant stations, of enormous frauds and embezzlements, and hence that grasping avarice, that avidity of spoil and treasure, which were more and more destroying the original singleness of purpose of the soldiers of Islam.

Moawyah was the first of the Caliphs who ordered that registers of tribute and taxes, as well as of spoils, should be kept in the Islamite countries, in their respective languages;

that is to say, in the Greek language in Syria, and in the Persian language in Irak ; but Abd'almâlec went further, and ordered that they should all be kept in Arabic. Nothing, however, could effectually check the extortion and corruption which was prevailing more and more in the administration of the conquered provinces. Even the rude Arab soldier who in his desert would have been content with his tent of hair-cloth, now aspired to the possession of fertile lands, or a residence amid the voluptuous pleasures of the city.

Waled had grown up amid the refinements and corruptions of the transplanted caliphate. He was more of a Greek and Persian than an Arab in his tastes ; and the very opposite of that primitive Moslem, Omar, in most of his habitudes. On assuming the sovereign power, he confirmed all the emirs or governors of provinces, and also the generals appointed by his father. On these he devolved all measures of government and warlike duties ; for himself he led a soft luxurious life amidst the delights of his harem. Yet, though he had sixty-three wives, he does not appear to have left any issue. Much of his time was devoted to the arts, and especially the art of architecture, in which he left some noble monuments to perpetuate his fame.

He caused the principal mosque at Cairo to be demolished, and one erected of greater majesty, the pillars of which had gilded capitals. He enlarged and beautified the grand mosque erected on the site of the temple of Solomon, for he was anxious to perpetuate the pilgrimage to Jerusalem established by his father. He gave command that the bounds of the mosque at Medina should be extended; so as to include the tomb of the Prophet, and the nine mansions of his wives. He furthermore ordered that all the buildings round the Caaba at Mecca should be thrown down, and a magnificent quadrangular mosque erected, such as is to be seen at the present day. For this purpose he sent a body of skilful Syrian architects from Damascus.

Many of the faithful were grieved, particularly those well stricken in years, the old residants of Mecca, to see the ancient simplicity established by the Prophet, violated by the splendor of this edifice; especially as the dwellings of numerous individuals were demolished to furnish a vast square for the foundations of the new edifice, which now inclosed within its circuit the Caaba, the well of Zem Zem, and the stations of different sects of Moslems, which came in pilgrimage.

All these works were carried on under the

supervision of his emirs, but the Caliph attended in person to the erection of a grand mosque in his capital of Damascus. In making arrangements for this majestic pile he cast his eyes on the superb church of St. John the Baptist, which had been embellished by the Roman emperors during successive ages, and enriched with the bones and relics of saints and martyrs. He offered the Christians forty thousand dinars of gold for this holy edifice; but they replied, gold was of no value in comparison with the sacred bones enshrined within its walls.

The Caliph, therefore, took possession of the church on his own authority, and either demolished or altered it, so as to suit his purpose in the construction of his mosque, and did not allow the Christian owners a single dirhem of compensation. He employed twelve thousand workmen constantly in this architectural enterprise, and one of his greatest regrets in his last moments was that he should not live to see it completed.

The architecture of these mosques was a mixture of Greek and Persian, and gave rise to the Saracenic style, of which Waled may be said to be founder. The slender and graceful palm-tree, may have served as a model for its columns; as the clustering trees and um-

brageous forests of the north are thought to have thrown their massive forms and shadowy glooms into Gothic architecture. These two kinds of architecture have often been confounded, but the Saracenic takes the precedence; the Gothic borrowed graces and embellishments from it in the times of the Crusades.

While the Caliph Waled lived indolently and voluptuously at Damascus, or occupied himself in erecting mosques, his generals extended his empire in various directions. Moslema Ibn Abd'almâlec, one of his fourteen brothers, led an army into Asia Minor, invaded Cappadocia, and laid siege to Tyana, a strong city garrisoned with imperial troops. It was so closely invested that it could receive no provisions; but the besiegers were equally in want of supplies. The contest was fierce on both sides, for both were sharpened and irritated by hunger, and it became a contest which could hold out longest against famine.

The duration of the siege enabled the emperor to send reinforcements to the place, but they were raw, undisciplined recruits, who were routed by the hungry Moslems, their camp captured, and their provisions greedily devoured. The defeat of these reinforcements rendered the defence of the city hopeless, and

the pressure of famine hastened a capitulation, the besieged not being aware that the besiegers were nearly as much famished as themselves. Moslema is accused by Christian writers of having violated the conditions of surrender; many of the inhabitants were driven forth into the deserts, and many of the remainder were taken for slaves. In a subsequent year Moslema made a successful incursion into Pontus and Armenia, a great part of which he subjugated, and took the city of Amasia, after a severely contested siege. He afterwards made a victorious campaign into Galatia, ravaging the whole province, and bearing away rich spoils and numerous captives.

While Moslema was thus bringing Asia Minor into subjection, his son Khatiba, a youth of great bravery, was no less successful in extending the empire of the faith toward the East. Appointed to the government of Khorassan, he did not content himself with attending to the affairs of his own province, but crossing the Oxus, ravaged the provinces of Turkistan, defeated a great army of Turks and Tartars, by which he had been beleaguered and reduced to great straits, and took the capital city of Bochara, with many others of inferior note.

He defeated also Magourek, the Khan of

Charism, and drove him to take refuge in the great city of Samarcand. This city, anciently called Marcanda, was one of the chief marts of Asia, as well for the wares imported from China and Tangut across the desert of Cobi, as of those brought through the mountains of the great Thibet, and those conveyed from India to the Caspian Sea. It was, therefore, a great resort and resting-place for caravans from all quarters. The surrounding country was renowned throughout the East for fertility, and ranked among the paradises, or gardens, of Asia.

To this city Khatiba laid siege, but the inhabitants set him at defiance, being confident of the strength of their walls, and aware that the Arabs had no battering-rams, nor other engines necessary for the attack of fortified places. A long and close siege, however, reduced the garrison to great extremity, and finding that the besiegers were preparing to carry the place by storm, they capitulated, agreeing to pay an annual tribute of one thousand dinars of gold and three thousand slaves.

Khatiba erected a magnificent mosque in that metropolis, and officiated personally in expounding the doctrines of Islam, which began soon to supersede the religion of the Magians, or Ghebers.

Camels of Burden Resting.

From De Laborde's "Voyage en Syrie."

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Extensive victories were likewise achieved in India during the reign of Waled, by Mohamed Ibn Casem, a native of Thayef, one of his generals, who conquered the kingdom of Sindia, or Sinde, killed its sovereign in battle, and sent his head to the Caliph; overran a great part of Central India, and first planted the standard of Islam on the banks of the Ganges, and the sacred river of the Hindoos.

Chapter XIX.

Further Triumph of Musa Ibn Nosseyr—Naval Enterprises—Descents in Sicily, Sardinia, and Mallorca—Invasion of Tingitania—Projects for the Invasion of Spain—Conclusion.

TO return to the affairs in Africa. During the first years of the caliphate of Waled, the naval armaments fitted out by Musa in the ports of Eastern Africa, continued to scour the Mediterranean, and carry terror and devastation into its islands. One of them coasted the island of Sicily in the eighty-sixth year of the Hegira, and attacked the city of Syracuse; but the object appears to have been mere plunder, not to retain possession. Another ravaged the island of Sardinia, sacked its cities, and brought off a vast number of prisoners and immense booty. Among the captives were Christian women of great beauty, and highly prized in the eastern harems. The command of the sea was ul-

timately given by Musa to his son Abdolola, who added to his nautical reputation by a descent upon the island of Mallorca.

While Abdolola was rejoicing his father's heart by exploits and triumphs on the sea, Abd'alaziz contributed no less to his pride and exultation by his achievements on land. Aided by this favorite son, Musa carried the terror of the Moslem arms to the western extremity of Mount Atlas, subduing Fez, Duquella, Morocco, and Sus. The valiant tribes of the Zenetes at length made peace, and entered into compact with him ; from other tribes Musa took hostages ; and by degrees the sway of the Caliph was established throughout western Almagreb to Cape Non on the Atlantic.

Musa was not a ferocious conqueror. The countries subjected by his arms became objects of his paternal care. He introduced law and order : instructed the natives in the doctrines of Islam, and defended the peaceful cultivators of the fields and residents in the cities against the incursions of predatory tribes. In return they requited his protection by contributing their fruits and flocks to the support of the armies, and furnishing steeds matchless for speed and beauty.

One region, however, yet remained to be subjugated before the conquest of Northern

Africa would be complete—the ancient Tingis, or Tingitania, the northern extremity of Almagreb. Here the continent of Africa protruded boldly to meet the continent of Europe; a narrow strait intervened, the strait of Hercules, the gate of the Mediterranean Sea. Two rocky promontories appeared to guard it on each side, the far famed pillars of Hercules. Two rock-built cities, Ceuta and Tangiers, on the African coast, were the keys of this gate, and controlled the neighboring seaboard. These had been held in ancient times by the Berber kings, who made this region their stronghold, and Tangiers their seat of power; but the keys had been wrested from their hands at widely-separated periods, first by the Vandals, and afterwards by the Goths, the conquerors of the opposite country of Spain; and the Gothic Spaniards had now held military possession for several generations.

Musa seems to have reserved this province for his last African campaign. He stationed his son Merwân, with ten thousand men, in a fortified camp on the frontier, while Taric Ibn Zeyad, a veteran general scarred in many a battle, scoured the country from the fountains or head waters of the river Moluya, to the mountains of Aldaran. The province was bravely defended by a Gothic noble, Count

Julian by name; but he was gradually driven to shut himself up in Ceuta. Meantime Tangiers yielded to the Moslem arms after an obstinate defence, and was strongly garrisoned by Arab and Egyptian troops, and the command given to Taric. An attempt was made to convert the Christian inhabitants to the faith of Islam; the Berber part easily conformed, but the Gothic persisted in unbelief, and rather than give up their religion, abandoned their abodes, and crossed over to Andaluz with the loss of all their property.

Musa now advanced upon Ceuta, into which Count Julian had drawn all his troops. He attempted to carry it by storm, but was gallantly repulsed, with the loss of many of his best troops. Repeated assaults were made with no better success: the city was situated on a promontory, and strongly fortified. Musa now laid waste the surrounding country, thinking to reduce the place by famine, but the proximity of Spain enabled the garrison to receive supplies and reinforcements across the straits.

Months were expended in this protracted and unavailing siege. According to some accounts Musa retired personally from the attempt, and returned to his seat of govern-

ment at Caerwan, leaving the army and province in charge of his son Merwân, and Taric in command of Tangiers.

And now occurred one of the most memorable pieces of treason in history. Count Julian, who had so nobly defended his post, and checked the hitherto irresistible arms of Islam, all at once made secret offers, not merely to deliver up Ceuta to the Moslem commander, but to betray Andaluz itself into his hands. The country he represented as rife for a revolt against Roderick the Gothic king, who was considered a usurper; and he offered to accompany and aid the Moslems in a descent upon the coast, where he had numerous friends ready to flock to his standard.

On the private wrongs received by Count Julian from his sovereign, which provoked him to this stupendous act of treason, we shall here say nothing. Musa was startled by his proposition. He had long cast a wistful eye at the mountains of Andaluz, brightening beyond the strait, but hitherto the conquest of Northern Africa had tasked all his means. Even now he feared to trust too readily to a man whose very proposition showed an utter want of faith. He determined, therefore, to despatch Taric Ibn Zeyad on a reconnoitring expedition to coast the opposite shores, accom-

panied by Count Julian, and ascertain the truth of his representations.

Taric accordingly embarked with a few hundred men in four merchant vessels, crossed the straits under the guidance of Count Julian, who, on landing despatched emissaries to his friends and adherents, summoning them to a conference at Jesirah al Khadra, or the Green Island, now Algeziras. Here, in presence of Taric, they confirmed all that Julian had said of the rebellious disposition of the country, and of their own readiness to join the standard of an invader. A plundering cruise along the coast convinced Taric of the wealth of the country, and he returned to the African shores with ample spoils and female captives of great beauty.

A new career of conquest seemed thus opening upon Musa. His predecessor, Acbah, had spurred his steed into the waves of the Atlantic, and sighed that there were no further lands to conquer; but here was another quarter of the world inviting the triumphs of Islam. He forthwith wrote to the Caliph, giving a glowing account of the country thus held out for conquest; a country abounding in noble monuments and wealthy cities; rivaling Syria in the fertility of its soil and the beauty of its climate; Yeman, or Arabia the Happy, in its

temperature; India in its flowers and spices; Hegiaz in its fruits and productions; Cathay in its precious and abundant mines; Aden in the excellence of its ports and harbors. "With the aid of God," added he, "I have reduced to obedience the Zenetes and the other Berber tribes of Zab and Deres, Zaara, Muzamuda, and Sus: the standard of Islam floats triumphant on the walls of Tangiers; thence to the opposite coast of Andaluz is but a space of twelve miles. Let but the Commander of the Faithful give the word, and the conquerors of Africa will cross into that land, there to carry the knowledge of the true God and the law of the Koran."

The Arab spirit of the Caliph was roused by this magnificent prospect of new conquests. He called to mind a tradition that Mahomet had promised the extension of his law to the uttermost regions of the West; and he now gave full authority to Musa to proceed in his pious enterprise, and carry the sword of Islam into the benighted land of Andaluz.

We have thus accomplished our self-allotted task. We have set forth, in simple and succinct narrative, a certain portion of this wonderful career of fanatical conquest. We have traced the progress of the little cloud which rose out of the deserts of Arabia, "no bigger than a

man's hand," until it has spread out and overshadowed the ancient quarters of the world and all their faded glories. We have shown the handful of proselytes of a pseudo prophet, driven from city to city, lurking in dens and caves of the earth, but at length rising to be leaders of armies and mighty conquerors; overcoming in pitched battle the Roman cohort, the Grecian phalanx and the gorgeous hosts of Persia; carrying their victories from the gates of the Caucasus to the western descents of Mount Atlas; from the banks of the Ganges to the Sus, the ultimate river in Mauritania; and now planting their standard on the pillars of Hercules, and threatening Europe with like subjugation.

Here, however, we stay our hand. Here we lay down our pen. Whether it will ever be our lot to resume this theme, to cross with the Moslem hosts the strait of Hercules, and narrate their memorable conquest of Gothic Spain, is one of those uncertainties of mortal life and aspirations of literary zeal, which beguile us with agreeable dreams, but too often end in disappointment.

END OF MAHOMET AND HIS SUCCESSORS.

Spanish Legends

HERETOFORE INCLUDED IN THE VOLUME ISSUED UNDER THE TITLE OF "SPANISH PAPERS."

The Legend of Don Roderick

THE LEGEND OF DON RODERICK.*

Chapter I.

Of the Ancient Inhabitants of Spain—Of the Misrule of Witiza the Wicked.

SPAIN, or Iberia, as it was called in ancient days, has been a country harassed from the earliest times by the invader. The Celts, the Greeks, the Phenicians, the Carthaginians, by turns or simultaneously,

* Many of the facts in this legend are taken from an old chronicle, written in quaint and antiquated Spanish, and professing to be a translation from the Arabic chronicle of the Moor Rasis, by Mohammed, a Moslem writer, and Gil Perez, a Spanish priest. It is supposed to be a piece of literary mosaic work, made up from both Spanish and Arabian chronicles; yet, from this work most of the Spanish historians have drawn their particulars relative to the fortunes of Don Roderick.

infringed its territories, drove the native Iberians from their rightful homes, and established colonies and founded cities in the land. It subsequently fell into the all-grasping power of Rome, remaining for some time a subjugated province; and when that gigantic empire crumbled into pieces, the Suevi, the Alani, and the Vandals, those barbarians of the North, overran and ravaged this devoted country, and portioned out the soil among them.

Their sway was not of long duration. In the fifth century the Goths, who were then the allies of Rome, undertook the reconquest of Iberia, and succeeded, after a desperate struggle of three years' duration. They drove before them the barbarous hordes, their predecessors, intermarried and incorporated themselves with the original inhabitants, and founded a powerful and splendid empire, comprising the Iberian peninsula, the ancient Narbonnaise, afterwards called Gallia Gotica, or Gothic Gaul, and a part of the African coast called Tingitania. A new nation was, in a manner, produced by this mixture of the Goths and Iberians. Sprang from a union of warrior races, reared and nurtured amidst the din of arms, the Gothic Spaniards, if they may so be termed, were a warlike, unquiet, yet high-minded and heroic people. Their simple and abstemious habits,

their contempt for toil and suffering, and their love of daring enterprise, fitted them for a soldier's life. So addicted were they to war that, when they had no external foes to contend with, they fought with one another; and, when engaged in battle, says an old chronicler, the very thunders and lightnings of heaven could not separate them.*

For two centuries and a half the Gothic power remained unshaken, and the sceptre was wielded by twenty-five successive kings. The crown was elective, in a council of palatines, composed of the bishops and nobles, who, while they swore allegiance to the newly made sovereign, bound him by a reciprocal oath to be faithful to his trust. Their choice was made from among the people, subject only to one condition, that the king should be of pure Gothic blood. But though the crown was elective in principle, it gradually became hereditary from usage, and the power of the sovereign grew to be almost absolute. The king was commander-in-chief of the armies; the whole patronage of the kingdom was in his hands, he summoned and dissolved the national councils, he made and revoked laws according to his pleasure; and, having ecclesi-

* Florain, *De Ocampo*, lib. iii., c. 12; Justin, *Abrev. Trog. Pomp.*, lib. xliv.; Bleda, *Cronica*, lib. ii., c. 3.

astical supremacy, he exercised a sway even over the consciences of his subjects.

The Goths, at the time of their inroad, were stout adherents of the Arian doctrines; but after a time they embraced the Catholic faith, which was maintained by the native Spaniards free from many of the gross superstitions of the Church at Rome, and this unity of faith contributed more than anything else to blend and harmonize the two races into one. The bishops and other clergy were exemplary in their lives, and aided to promote the influence of the laws and maintain the authority of the state. The fruits of regular and secure government were manifest in the advancement of agriculture, commerce, and the peaceful arts, and in the increase of wealth, of luxury, and refinement; but there was a gradual decline of the simple, hardy, and warlike habits that had distinguished the nation in its semi-barbarous days.

Such was the state of Spain when, in the year of Redemption 701, Witiza was elected to the Gothic throne. The beginning of his reign gave promise of happy days to Spain. He redressed grievances, moderated the tributes of his subjects, and conducted himself with mingled mildness and energy in the administration of the laws. In a little while,

however, he threw off the mask, and showed himself in his true nature—cruel and luxurious.

Two of his relatives, sons of a preceding king, awakened his jealousy for the security of his throne. One of them, named Favila, Duke of Cantabria, he put to death, and would have inflicted the same fate upon his son Pelayo, but that the youth was beyond his reach, being preserved by Providence for the future salvation of Spain. The other object of his suspicion was Theodofredo, who lived retired from court. The violence of Witiza reached him even in his retirement. His eyes were put out, and he was immured within a castle at Cordova. Roderick, the youthful son of Theodofredo, escaped to Italy, where he received protection from the Romans.

Witiza, now considering himself secure upon the throne, gave the reins to his licentious passions, and soon, by his tyranny and sensuality, acquired the appellation of Witiza the Wicked. Despising the old Gothic continence, and yielding to the example of the sect of Mahomet, which suited his lascivious temperament, he indulged in a plurality of wives and concubines, encouraging his subjects to do the same. Nay, he even sought to gain the sanction of the Church to his excesses, promulgating a law by which the clergy were

released from the vows of celibacy, and permitted to marry and to entertain paramours.

The sovereign Pontiff Constantine threatened to depose and excommunicate him, unless he abrogated this licentious law; but Witiza set him at defiance, threatening like his Gothic predecessor Alaric to assail the eternal city with his troops, and make spoil of her accumulated treasures.* "We will adorn our damsels," said he, "with the jewels of Rome, and replenish our coffers from the mint of St. Peter."

Some of the clergy opposed themselves to the innovating spirit of the monarch, and endeavored from the pulpits to rally the people to the pure doctrines of their faith; but they were deposed from their sacred office, and banished as seditious mischief-makers. The church of Toledo continued refractory; the archbishop Sindaredo, it is true, was disposed to accommodate himself to the corruptions of the times, but the prebendaries battled intrepidly against the new laws of the monarch, and stood manfully in defence of their vows of chastity. "Since the church of Toledo will not yield itself to our will," said Witiza, "it shall have two husbands." So saying, he

* *Chron. de Luitprando*, 709. Abarca, *Anales de Aragon* (el Mahometismo, fol. v.).

appointed his own brother Oppas, at that time archbishop of Seville, to take a seat with Sindaredo in the episcopal chair of Toledo, and made him primate of Spain. He was a priest after his own heart, and seconded him in all his profligate abuses.

It was in vain the denunciations of the Church were fulminated from the chair of St. Peter. Witiza threw off all allegiance to the Roman Pontiff, threatening with pain of death those who should obey the papal mandates. "We will suffer no foreign ecclesiastic, with triple crown," said he, "to domineer over our dominions."

The Jews had been banished from the country during the preceding reign, but Witiza permitted them to return, and even bestowed upon their synagogues privileges of which he had despoiled the churches. The children of Israel, when scattered throughout the earth by the fall of Jerusalem, had carried with them into other lands the gainful arcana of traffic, and were especially noted as opulent money-changers, and curious dealers in gold and silver and precious stones; on this occasion, therefore, they were enabled, it is said, to repay the monarch for his protection by bags of money, and caskets of sparkling gems, the rich product of their oriental commerce.

The kingdom at this time enjoyed external peace, but there were symptoms of internal discontent. Witiza took the alarm; he remembered the ancient turbulence of the nation and its proneness to internal feud. Issuing secret orders, therefore, in all directions, he dismantled most of the cities, and demolished the castles and fortresses that might serve as rallying-points for the factious. He disarmed the people also, and converted the weapons of war into the implements of peace. It seemed, in fact, as if the millennium were dawning upon the land; for the sword was beaten into a ploughshare, and the spear into a pruning-hook.

While thus the ancient martial fire of the nation was extinguished, its morals likewise were corrupted. The altars were abandoned, the churches closed, wide disorder and sensuality prevailed throughout the land, so that, according to the old chroniclers, within the compass of a few short years "Witiza the Wicked taught all Spain to sin."

Chapter II.

The Rise of Don Roderick—His Government.

WOE to the ruler who founds his hope of sway on the weakness or corruption of the people. The very measures taken by Witiza to perpetuate his power insured his downfall. While the whole nation, under his licentious rule, was sinking into vice and effeminacy, and the arm of war was unstrung, the youthful Roderick, son of Theodofredo, was training up for action in the stern but wholesome school of adversity. He instructed himself in the use of arms; became adroit and vigorous by varied exercises; learned to despise all danger, and inured himself to hunger and watchfulness and the rigor of the seasons.

His merits and misfortunes procured him many friends among the Romans; and when, being arrived at a fitting age, he undertook to revenge the wrongs of his father and his

kindred, a host of brave and hardy soldiers flocked to his standard. With these he made his sudden appearance in Spain. The friends of his house and the disaffected of all classes hastened to join him, and he advanced rapidly and without opposition, through an unarmed and enervated land.

Witiza saw too late the evil he had brought upon himself. He made a hasty levy, and took the field with a scantily equipped and undisciplined host, but was easily routed and made prisoner, and the whole kingdom submitted to Don Roderick.

The ancient city of Toledo, the royal residence of the Gothic kings, was the scene of high festivity and solemn ceremonial on the coronation of the victor. Whether he was elected to the throne according to the Gothic usage, or seized it by the right of conquest, is a matter of dispute among historians, but all agree that the nation submitted cheerfully to his sway, and looked forward to prosperity and happiness under their newly elevated monarch. His appearance and character seemed to justify the anticipation. He was in the splendor of youth, and of a majestic presence. His soul was bold and daring, and elevated by lofty desires. He had a sagacity that penetrated the thoughts of men, and a

magnificent spirit that won all hearts. Such is the picture which ancient writers give of Don Roderick, when, with all the stern and simple virtues unimpaired, which he had acquired in adversity and exile, and flushed with the triumph of a pious revenge, he ascended the Gothic throne.

Prosperity, however, is the real touchstone of the human heart; no sooner did Roderick find himself in possession of the crown, than the love of power and the jealousy of rule were awakened in his breast. His first measure was against Witiza, who was brought in chains into his presence. Roderick beheld the captive monarch with an unpitying eye, remembering only his wrongs and cruelties to his father. "Let the evils he has inflicted on others be visited upon his own head," said he; "as he did unto Theodofredo, even so be it done unto him." So the eyes of Witiza were put out, and he was thrown into the same dungeon at Cordova in which Theodofredo had languished. There he passed the brief remnant of his days in perpetual darkness, a prey to wretchedness and remorse.

Roderick now cast an uneasy and suspicious eye upon Evan and Siseburto, the two sons of Witiza. Fearful lest they should foment some secret rebellion, he banished them the king-

dom. They took refuge in the Spanish dominions in Africa, where they were received and harbored by Requila, governor of Tangier, out of gratitude for favors which he had received from their late father. There they remained, to brood over their fallen fortunes, and to aid in working out the future woes of Spain.

Their uncle Oppas, bishop of Seville, who had been made copartner, by Witiza, in the archiepiscopal chair at Toledo, would have likewise fallen under the suspicion of the king; but he was a man of consummate art, and vast exterior sanctity, and won upon the good graces of the monarch. He was suffered therefore, to retain his sacred office at Seville; but the see of Toledo was given in charge to the venerable Urbino, and the law of Witiza was revoked that dispensed the clergy from their vows of celibacy.

The jealousy of Roderick for the security of his crown was soon again aroused, and his measures were prompt and severe. Having been informed that the governors of certain castles and fortresses in Castile and Andalusia had conspired against him, he caused them to be put to death, and their strongholds to be demolished. He now went on to imitate the pernicious policy of his predecessor, throwing down walls and towers, disarming the people,

and thus incapacitating them from rebellion. A few cities were permitted to retain their fortifications, but these were intrusted to alcaides in whom he had especial confidence; the greater part of the kingdom was left defenceless; the nobles, who had been roused to temporary manhood during the recent stir of war, sunk back into the inglorious state of inaction which had disgraced them during the reign of Witiza—passing their time in feasting and dancing to the sound of loose and wanton minstrelsy.* It was scarcely possible to recognize in these idle wassailers and soft voluptuaries the descendants of the stern and frugal warriors of the frozen North—who had braved flood and mountain, and heat and cold, and had battled their way to empire across half a world in arms.

They surrounded their youthful monarch, it is true, with a blaze of military pomp. Nothing could surpass the splendor of their arms, which were embossed and enameled, and enriched with gold and jewels and curious devices; nothing could be more gallant and glorious than their array; it was all plume and banner and silken pageantry, the gorgeous trappings for tilt and tourney and courtly revel; but the iron soul of war was wanting.

* Mariana, *Hist. Esp.*, lib. vi. c. 21.

How rare it is to learn wisdom from the misfortunes of others. With the fate of Witiza full before his eyes, Don Roderick indulged in the same pernicious errors, and was doomed, in like manner, to prepare the way for his own perdition.

Chapter III.

Of the Loves of Roderick and the Princess Elyata.

AS yet the heart of Roderick, occupied by the struggles of his early life, by warlike enterprises, and by the inquietudes of newly-gotten power, had been insensible to the charms of women; but in the present voluptuous calm the amorous propensities of his nature assumed their sway. There are divers accounts of the youthful beauty who first found favor in his eyes, and was elevated by him to the throne. We follow in our legend the details of an Arabian chronicler,* authenticated by a Spanish poet.† Let those who dispute our facts produce better authority for their contradiction.

Among the few fortified places that had not been dismantled by Don Roderick was the an-

* *Perdida de España*, por Abulcasim Tarif Abentarique, lib. 1.

† Lope de Vega.

cient city of Denia, situated on the Mediterranean coast, and defended by a rock-built castle that overlooked the sea.

The alcaide of the castle, with many of the people of Denia, was one day on his knees in the chapel, imploring the Virgin to allay a tempest which was strewing the coast with wrecks, when a sentinel brought word that a Moorish cruiser was standing for the land. The alcaide gave orders to ring the alarm-bells, light signal-fires on the hill-tops, and rouse the country, for the coast was subject to cruel maraudings from the Barbary cruisers.

In a little while the horsemen of the neighborhood were seen pricking along the beach, armed with such weapons as they could find, and the alcaide and his scanty garrison descended from the hill. In the meantime the Moorish bark came rolling and pitching towards the land. As it drew near, the rich carving and gilding with which it was decorated, its silken bandaroles and banks of crimson oars, showed it to be no warlike vessel, but a sumptuous galiot destined for state and ceremony. It bore the marks of the tempest ; the masts were broken, the oars shattered, and fragments of snowy sails and silken awnings were fluttering in the blast.

As the galiot grounded upon the sand, the

impatient rabble rushed into the surf to capture and make spoil ; but were awed into admiration and respect by the appearance of the illustrious company on board. There were Moors of both sexes sumptuously arrayed, and adorned with precious jewels, bearing the demeanor of persons of lofty rank. Among them shone conspicuous a youthful beauty, magnificently attired, to whom all seemed to pay reverence.

Several of the Moors surrounded her with drawn swords, threatening death to any that approached ; others sprang from the bark, and throwing themselves on their knees before the alcaide, implored him by his honor and courtesy as a knight, to protect a royal virgin from injury and insult.

"You behold before you," said they, "the only daughter of the king of Algiers, the betrothed bride of the son of the king of Tunis. We were conducting her to the court of her expecting bridegroom, when a tempest drove us from our course and compelled us to take refuge on your coast. Be not more cruel than the tempest, but deal nobly with that which even sea and storm have spared."

The alcaide listened to their prayers. He conducted the princess and her train to the castle, where every honor due to her rank was

paid her. Some of her ancient attendants interceded for her liberation, promising countless sums to be paid by her father for her ransom; but the alcaide turned a deaf ear to all their golden offers. "She is a royal captive," said he; "it belongs to my sovereign alone to dispose of her." After she had reposed, therefore, for some days at the castle, and recovered from the fatigue and terror of the seas, he caused her to be conducted, with all her train, in magnificent state to the court of Don Roderick.

The beautiful Elyata* entered Toledo more like a triumphant sovereign than a captive. A chosen band of Christian horsemen, splendidly armed, appeared to wait upon her as a mere guard of honor. She was surrounded by the Moorish damsels of her train, and followed by her own Moslem guards, all attired with the magnificence that had been intended to grace her arrival at the court of Tunis. The princess was arrayed in bridal robes, woven in the most costly looms of the Orient; her diadem sparkled with diamonds and was decorated with the rarest plumes of the bird of paradise, and even the silken trappings of her palfrey, which swept the ground, were covered with pearls and precious stones. As

* By some she is called Zara.

this brilliant cavalcade crossed the bridge of the Tagus, all Toledo poured forth to behold it, and nothing was heard throughout the city but praises of the wonderful beauty of the princess of Algiers. King Roderick came forth, attended by the chivalry of his court, to receive the royal captive. His recent voluptuous life had disposed him for tender and amorous affections, and at the first sight of the beautiful Elyata he was enraptured with her charms. Seeing her face clouded with sorrow and anxiety, he soothed her with gentle and courteous words, and, conducting her to a royal palace, "Behold," said he, "thy habitation, where no one shall molest thee; consider thyself at home in the mansion of thy father, and dispose of anything according to thy will."

Here the princess passed her time with the female attendants who had accompanied her from Algiers; and no one but the king was permitted to visit her, who daily became more and more enamored of his lovely captive, and sought by tender assiduity to gain her affections. The distress of the princess at her captivity was soothed by this gentle treatment. She was of an age when sorrow cannot long hold sway over the heart. Accompanied by her youthful attendants, she ranged the spa-

cious apartments of the palace, and sported among the groves and alleys of its garden. Every day the remembrance of the paternal home grew less and less painful, and the king became more and more amiable in her eyes; and when at length he offered to share his heart and throne with her, she listened with downcast looks and kindling blushes, but with an air of resignation.

One obstacle remained to the complete fruition of the monarch's wishes, and this was the religion of the princess. Roderick forthwith employed the archbishop of Toledo to instruct the beautiful Elyata in the mysteries of the Christian faith. The female intellect is quick in perceiving the merits of new doctrines; the archbishop, therefore, soon succeeded in converting, not merely the princess, but most of her attendants, and a day was appointed for their public baptism. The ceremony was performed with great pomp and solemnity, in the presence of all the nobility and chivalry of the court. The princess and her damsels, clad in white, walked on foot to the cathedral, while numerous beautiful children, arrayed as angels, strewed their path with flowers; and the archbishop meeting them at the portal, received them, as it were, into the bosom of the church. The princess

abandoned her Moorish appellation of Elyata, and was baptized by the name of Exilona, by which she was thenceforth called, and has generally been known in history.

The nuptials of Roderick and the beautiful convert took place shortly afterwards, and were celebrated with great magnificence. There were jousts, and tourneys, and banquets, and other rejoicings, which lasted twenty days, and were attended by the principal nobles from all parts of Spain. After these were over, such of the attendants of the princess as refused to embrace Christianity, and desired to return to Africa were dismissed with munificent presents; and an embassy was sent to the king of Algiers, to inform him of the nuptials of his daughter, and to proffer him the friendship of King Roderick.*

* "Como esta Infanta era muy hermosa, y el Rey [Don Rodrigo] dispuesta y gentil hombre, entro por medio el amor y aficion, y junto con el regalo con que la avia mandado hospedar y servir ful causa que el rey persuadio esta Infanta, que si se tornava a su ley de christiano la tomaria por muger, y que la haria señora de sus Reynos. Con esta persuasion ella fue contenta, y aviendose vuelto christiana, se caso con ella, y se celebraron sus bodas con muchas fiestas y regozijos, como era razon."—Abulcassim, *Conq'st de Espan.*, cap. iii.

Chapter IV.

Of Count Julian.

FOR a time Don Roderick lived happily with his young and beautiful queen, and Toledo was the seat of festivity and splendor. The principal nobles throughout the kingdom repaired to his court to pay him homage, and to receive his commands; and none were more devoted in their reverence than those who were obnoxious to suspicion from their connection with the late king.

Among the foremost of these was Count Julian, a man destined to be infamously renowned in the dark story of his country's woes. He was of one of the proudest Gothic families, lord of Consuegra and Algeziras, and connected by marriage with Witiza and the bishop Oppas—his wife, the countess Frandina, being their sister. In consequence of this connection, and of his own merits, he had enjoyed the highest dignities and commands, being one of the Espatorios, or royal sword-bearers—an

office of the greatest confidence about the person of the sovereign.* He had, moreover, been intrusted with the military government of the Spanish possessions on the African coast of the strait, which at that time were threatened by the Arabs of the East, the followers of Mahomet, who were advancing their victorious standard to the extremity of Western Africa. Count Julian established his seat of government at Ceuta, the frontier bulwark, and one of the far-famed gates of the Mediterranean Sea. Here he boldly faced, and held in check, the torrent of Moslem invasion.

Don Julian was a man of an active, but irregular genius, and a grasping ambition; he had a love for power and grandeur, in which he was joined by his haughty countess; and they could ill brook the downfall of their house, as threatened by the fate of Witiza. They had hastened therefore to pay their court to the newly elevated monarch, and to assure him of their fidelity to his interests.

Roderick was readily persuaded of the sin-

* Condes Espatorios; so called from the drawn swords of ample size and breadth with which they kept guard in the ante-chambers of the Gothic kings. Comes Spathariorum, custodum corporis Regis Profectus. Hunc et Propospatharium appellatum existimo.—*Patr. Pant. de Offic.*, Goth.

cerity of Count Julian; he was aware of his merits as a soldier and a governor, and continued him in his important command; honoring him with many other marks of implicit confidence. Count Julian sought to confirm this confidence by every proof of devotion. It was a custom among the Goths to rear many of the children of the most illustrious families in the royal household. They served as pages to the king, and handmaids and ladies of honor to the queen, and were instructed in all manner of accomplishments befitting their gentle blood. When about to depart for Ceuta, to resume his command, Don Julian brought his daughter Florinda to present her to the sovereigns. She was a beautiful virgin that had not as yet attained to womanhood. "I confide her to your protection," said he to the king, "to be unto her as a father; and to have her trained in the paths of virtue. I can leave with you no dearer pledge of my loyalty."

King Roderick received the timid and blushing maiden into his parental care; promising to watch over her happiness with a parent's eye, and that she should be enrolled among the most cherished attendants of the queen. With this assurance of the welfare of his child, Count Julian departed, well pleased, for his government at Ceuta.

Chapter V.

The Story of Florinda.

THE beautiful daughter of Count Julian was received with great favor by the queen Exilona, and admitted among the noble damsels that attended upon her person. Here she lived in honor and apparent security, and surrounded by innocent delights. To gratify his queen, Don Roderick had built for her rural recreation a palace without the walls of Toledo, on the banks of the Tagus. It stood in the midst of a garden, adorned after the luxurious style of the East. The air was perfumed by fragrant shrubs and flowers; the groves resounded with the song of the nightingale, while the gush of fountains and water-falls, and the distant murmur of the Tagus, made it a delightful retreat during the sultry days of summer. The charm of perfect privacy also reigned throughout the place, for

the garden walls were high, and numerous guards kept watch without to protect it from all intrusion.

In this delicious abode, more befitting an oriental voluptuary than a Gothic king, Don Roderick was accustomed to while away much of that time which should have been devoted to the toilsome cares of government. The very security and peace which he had produced throughout his dominions by his precautions to abolish the means and habitudes of war, had effected a disastrous change in his character. The hardy and heroic qualities which had conducted him to the throne, were softened in the lap of indulgence. Surrounded by the pleasures of an idle and effeminate court, and beguiled by the example of his degenerate nobles, he gave way to a fatal sensuality that had lain dormant in his nature during the virtuous days of his adversity. The mere love of female beauty had first enamored him of Exilona, and the same passion fostered by voluptuous idleness, now betrayed him into the commission of an act fatal to himself and Spain. The following is the story of his error as gathered from an old chronicle and legend.

In a remote part of the palace was an apartment devoted to the queen. It was like an

eastern harem, shut up from the foot of man, and where the king himself but rarely entered. It had its own courts, and gardens, and fountains, where the queen was wont to recreate herself with her damsels, as she had been accustomed to do in the jealous privacy of her father's palace.

One sultry day the king, instead of taking his siesta, or mid-day slumber, repaired to this apartment to seek the society of the queen. In passing through a small oratory, he was drawn by the sound of female voices to a casement overhung with myrtles and jessamines. It looked into an interior garden or court, set out with orange trees, in the midst of which was a marble fountain, surrounded by a grassy bank, enamelled with flowers.

It was the high noontide of a summer day, when, in sultry Spain, the landscape trembles to the eye, and all nature seeks repose, except the grasshopper, that pipes his lulling note to the herdsman as he sleeps beneath the shade.

Around the fountain were several of the damsels of the queen, who, confident of the sacred privacy of the place, were yielding in that cool retreat to the indulgence prompted by the season and the hour. Some lay asleep on the flowery bank, others sat on the margin of the fountain, talking and laughing, as they

bathed their feet in its limpid waters, and King Roderick beheld delicate limbs shining through the waves that might rival the marble in whiteness.

Among the damsels was one who had come from the Barbary coast with the queen. Her complexion had the dark tinge of Mauritania, but it was clear and transparent, and the deep rich rose blushed through the lovely brown. Her eyes were black and full of fire, and flashed under long silken eyelashes.

A sportive contest arose among the maidens, as to the comparative beauty of the Spanish and Moorish forms; but the Mauritanian damsel revealed limbs of voluptuous symmetry that seemed to defy all rivalry.

The Spanish beauties were on the point of giving up the contest, when they bethought themselves of the young Florinda, the daughter of Count Julian, who lay on the grassy bank, abandoned to a summer slumber. The soft glow of youth and health mantled on her cheek; her fringed eyelashes scarcely covered her sleeping orbs; her moist and ruby lips were slightly parted, just revealing a gleam of her ivory teeth, while her innocent bosom rose and fell beneath her bodice, like the gentle swelling and sinking of a tranquil sea. There was a breathing tenderness and beauty in the sleep-

ing virgin, that seemed to send forth sweetness like the flowers around her.

"Behold," cried her companions exultingly, "the champion of Spanish beauty!"

In their playful eagerness they half disrobed the innocent Florinda before she was aware. She awoke in time, however, to escape from their busy hands; but enough of her charms had been revealed to convince the monarch that they were not to be rivalled by the rarest beauties of Mauritania.

From this day the heart of Roderick was inflamed with a fatal passion. He gazed on the beautiful Florinda with a fervid desire, and sought to read in her looks whether there was levity or wantonness in her bosom; but the eye of the damsel ever sunk beneath his gaze, and remained bent on the earth in virgin modesty.

In vain he called to mind the sacred trust reposed in him by Count Julian, and the promise he had given to watch over his daughter with parental care; his heart was vitiated by sensual indulgence, and the consciousness of power had rendered him selfish in his gratifications.

Being one evening in the garden where the queen was diverting herself with her damsels, and coming to the fountain where he had be-

held the innocent maidens at their sport, he could no longer restrain the passion raging within his breast. Seating himself beside the fountain, he called Florinda to draw forth a thorn which had pierced his hand. The maiden knelt at his feet to examine his hand, and the touch of her slender fingers thrilled through his veins. As she knelt, too, her amber locks fell in rich ringlets about her beautiful head, her innocent bosom palpitated beneath the crimson bodice, and her timid blushes increased the effulgence of her charms.

Having examined the monarch's hand in vain, she looked up in his face with artless perplexity.

"Señor," said she, "I can find no thorn nor any sign of wound."

Don Roderick grasped her hand and pressed it to his heart. "It is here, lovely Florinda!" said he; "it is here! and thou alone canst pluck it forth!"

"My lord!" exclaimed the blushing and astonished maiden.

"Florinda!" said Don Roderick, "dost thou love me?"

"Señor," said she, "my father taught me to love and reverence you. He confided me to your care as one who would be as a parent to me, when he should be far distant, serving

your majesty with life and loyalty. May God incline your majesty ever to protect me as a father." So saying, the maiden dropped her eyes to the ground, and continued kneeling; but her countenance had become deadly pale, and as she knelt she trembled.

"Florinda," said the king, "either thou dost not, or thou wilt not understand me. I would have thee love me, not as a father, nor as a monarch, but as one who adores thee. Why dost thou start? No one shall know our loves; and, moreover, the love of a monarch inflicts no degradation, like the love of a common man; riches and honors attend upon it. I will advance thee to rank and dignity, and place thee above the proudest females of my court. Thy father, too, shall be more exalted and endowed than any noble in my realm."

The soft eye of Florinda kindled at these words. "Señor," said she, "the line I spring from can receive no dignity by means so vile; and my father would rather die than purchase rank and power by the dishonor of his child. But I see," continued she, "that your majesty speaks in this manner only to try me. You may have thought me light and simple, and unworthy to attend upon the queen. I pray your majesty to pardon me, that I have taken your pleasantry in such serious part."

In this way the agitated maiden sought to evade the addresses of the monarch, but still her cheek was blanched and her lip quivered as she spake.

The king pressed her hand to his lips with fervor. "May ruin seize me," cried he, "if I speak to prove thee. My heart, my kingdom, are at thy command. Only be mine, and thou shalt rule absolute mistress of myself and my domains."

The damsel rose from the earth where she had hitherto knelt, and her whole countenance glowed with virtuous indignation. "My lord," said she, "I am your subject, and in your power; take my life if it be your pleasure, but nothing shall tempt me to commit a crime which would be treason to the queen, disgrace to my father, agony to my mother, and perdition to myself." With these words she left the garden, and the king, for the moment, was too much awed by her indignant virtue to oppose her departure.

We shall pass briefly over the succeeding events of the story of Florinda, about which so much has been said and sung by chronicler and bard; for the sober page of history should be carefully chastened from all scenes that might inflame a wanton imagination—leaving them to poems and romances, and such like

highly seasoned works of fantasy and recreation.

Let it suffice to say that Don Roderick pursued his suit to the beautiful Florinda, his passion being more and more inflamed by the resistance of the virtuous damsel. At length, forgetting what was due to helpless beauty, to his own honor as a knight, and his word as a sovereign, he triumphed over her weakness by base and unmanly violence.

There are not wanting those who affirm that the hapless Florinda lent a yielding ear to the solicitations of the monarch, and her name has been treated with opprobrium in several of the ancient chronicles and legendary ballads that have transmitted, from generation to generation, the story of the woes of Spain. In very truth, however, she appears to have been a guiltless victim, resisting as far as helpless female could resist, the arts and intrigues of a powerful monarch, who had naught to check the indulgence of his will, and bewailing her disgrace with a poignancy that shows how dearly she had prized her honor.

In the first paroxysm of her grief she wrote a letter to her father, blotted with her tears, and almost incoherent from her agitation. "Would to God, my father," said she, "that the earth had opened and swallowed me ere I

had been reduced to write these lines. I blush to tell thee, what it is not proper to conceal. Alas, my father! thou hast intrusted thy lamb to the guardianship of the lion. Thy daughter has been dishonored, the royal cradle of the Goths polluted, and our lineage insulted and disgraced. Hasten, my father, to rescue your child from the power of the spoiler, and to vindicate the honor of your house."

When Florinda had written these lines she summoned a youthful esquire who had been a page in the service of her father. "Saddle thy steed," said she, "and if thou dost aspire to knightly honor, or hope for lady's grace; if thou hast fealty for thy lord, or devotion to his daughter, speed swiftly upon my errand. Rest not, halt not, spare not the spur, but hie thee day and night until thou reach the sea; take the first bark, and haste with sail and oar to Ceuta, nor pause until thou give this letter to the count my father." The youth put the letter in his bosom. "Trust me, lady," said he, "I will neither halt, nor turn aside, nor cast a look behind, until I reach Count Julian." He mounted his fleet steed, sped his way across the bridge, and soon left behind him the verdant valley of the Tagus.

Chapter VI.

Don Roderick Receives an Extraordinary Embassy.

THE heart of Don Roderick was not so depraved by sensuality, but that the wrong he had been guilty of toward the innocent Florinda, and the disgrace he had inflicted on her house, weighed heavy on his spirits, and a cloud began to gather on his once clear and unwrinkled brow.

Heaven at this time, say the old Spanish chronicles, permitted a marvelous intimation of the wrath with which it intended to visit the monarch and his people, in punishment of their sins; nor are we, say the same orthodox writers, to startle and withhold our faith when we meet in the page of discreet and sober history with these signs and portents, which transcend the probabilities of ordinary life; for the revolutions of empires and the downfalls of mighty kings are awful events, that shake the

physical as well as the moral world, and are often announced by forerunning marvels and prodigious omens.

With such like cautious preliminaries do the wary but credulous historiographers of yore usher in a marvelous event of prophecy and enchantment, linked in ancient story with the fortunes of Don Roderick, but which modern doubters would fain hold up as an apocryphal tradition of Arabian origin.

Now, so it happened, according to the legend, that about this time, as King Roderick was seated one day on his throne, surrounded by his nobles, in the ancient city of Toledo, two men of venerable appearance entered the hall of audience. Their snowy beards descended to their breasts, and their grey hairs were bound with ivy. They were arrayed in white garments of foreign or antiquated fashion which swept the ground, and were cinctured with girdles, wrought with the signs of the zodiac, from which were suspended enormous bunches of keys of every variety of form. Having approached the throne and made obeisance,—"Know, O king," said one of the old men, "that in days of yore, when Hercules of Lybia, surnamed the Strong, had set up his pillars at the ocean strait, he erected a tower near to this ancient city of Toledo. He built it of prodi-

gious strength, and finished it with magic art shutting up within it a fearful secret, never to be penetrated without peril and disaster. To protect this terrible mystery he closed the entrance to the edifice with a ponderous door of iron, secured by a great lock of steel, and he left a command that every king who should succeed him should add another lock to the portal ; denouncing woe and destruction on him who should eventually unfold the secret of the tower.

" The guardianship of the portal was given to our ancestors, and has continued in our family, from generation to generation, since the days of Hercules. Several kings, from time to time, have caused the gate to be thrown open, and have attempted to enter, but have paid dearly for their temerity. Some have perished within the threshold ; others have been overwhelmed with horror at tremendous sounds, which shook the foundations of the earth, and have hastened to reclose the door and secure it with its thousand locks. Thus, since the days of Hercules, the inmost recesses of the pile have never been penetrated by mortal man, and a profound mystery continues to prevail over this great enchantment. This, O king, is all we have to relate ; and our errand is to entreat thee to repair to the tower

and affix thy lock to the portal, as has been done by all thy predecessors." Having thus said, the ancient men made a profound reverence and departed from the presence-chamber.*

Don Roderick remained for some time lost in thought after the departure of the men; he then dismissed all his court excepting the venerable Urbino, at that time archbishop of Toledo. The long white beard of this prelate bespoke his advanced age, and his overhanging eyebrows showed him a man full of wary counsel.

"Father," said the king, "I have an earnest desire to penetrate the mystery of this tower." The worthy prelate shook his hoary head. "Beware, my son," said he; "there are secrets hidden from man for his good. Your predecessors for many generations have respected this mystery, and have increased in might and empire. A knowledge of it, therefore, is not material to the welfare of your kingdom. Seek not then to indulge a rash and unprofitable curiosity, which is interdicted under such awful menaces."

"Of what importance," cried the king, "are the menaces of Hercules the Libyan? was he not a pagan? and can his enchantment have aught

* *Perdida de España*, por Abulcasim Tarif Abentarique, L. i., c. 6. *Cronica del Rey Don Rodrigo*, por el Moro Rasis, L. i., c. 1. Bleda, *Cron.*, cap. 7.

avail against a believer in our holy faith? Doubtless in this tower are locked up treasures of gold and jewels, amassed in days of old, the spoils of mighty kings, the riches of the pagan world. My coffers are exhausted; I have need of supply; and surely it would be an acceptable act in the eyes of Heaven to draw forth this wealth which lies buried under profane and necromantic spells, and consecrate it to religious purposes."

The venerable archbishop still continued to remonstrate, but Don Roderick heeded not his counsel, for he was led on by his malignant star. "Father," said he, "it is in vain you attempt to dissuade me. My resolution is fixed. To-morrow I will explore the hidden mystery, or rather the hidden treasures, of this tower."

Chapter VII.

Story of the Marvellous and Portentous Tower.

THE morning sun shone brightly upon the cliff-built towers of Toledo, when King Roderick issued out of the gate of the city at the head of a numerous train of courtiers and cavaliers, and crossed the bridge that bestrides the deep rocky bed of the Tagus. The shining cavalcade wound up the road that leads among the mountains, and soon came in sight of the necromantic tower.

Of this renowned edifice marvels are related by the ancient Arabian and Spanish chroniclers, "and I doubt much," adds the venerable Agapida, "whether many readers will not consider the whole as a cunningly devised fable, sprung from an Oriental imagination; but it is not for me to reject a fact which is recorded by all those writers who are the fathers of our national history; a fact too, which

is as well attested as most of the remarkable events in the story of Don Roderick. None but light and inconsiderate minds," contiuues the good friar, "do hastily reject the marvellous. To the thinking mind the whole world is enveloped in mystery, and everything is full of type and portent. To such a mind the necromantic tower of Toledo will appear as one of those wondrous monuments of the olden time; one of those Egyptian and Chaldaic piles, storied with hidden wisdom and mystic prophecy, which have been devised in past ages, when man yet enjoyed an intercourse with high and spiritual natures, and when human foresight partook of divination."

This singular tower was round and of great height and grandeur, erected upon a lofty rock, and surrounded by crags and precipices. The foundation was supported by four brazen lions, each taller than a cavalier on horseback. The walls were built of small pieces of jasper and various colored marbles, not larger than a man's hand; so subtilely joined, however, that, but for their different hues, they might be taken for one entire stone. They were arranged with marvellous cunning, so as to represent battles and warlike deeds of times and heroes long since passed away, and the whole surface was so admirably polished that

the stones were as lustrous as glass, and reflected the rays of the sun with such resplendent brightness as to dazzle all beholders.*

King Roderick and his courtiers arrived wondering and amazed at the foot of the rock. Here there was a narrow arched way cut through the living stone, the only entrance to the tower. It was closed by a massive iron gate, covered with rusty locks of divers workmanship and in the fashion of different centuries, which had been affixed by the predecessors of Don Roderick. On either side of the portal stood the two ancient guardians of the tower, laden with the keys appertaining to the locks.

The king alighted, and approaching the portals ordered the guardians to unlock the gate. The hoary headed men drew back with terror. "Alas!" cried they, "what is it your majesty requires of us? Would you have the mischiefs of this tower unbound, and let loose to shake the earth to its foundations?"

The venerable archbishop Urbino likewise implored him not to disturb a mystery which had been held sacred from generation to generation within the memory of man, and which even Cæsar himself, when sovereign of Spain

* From the minute account of the good friar, drawn from the ancient chronicles, it would appear that the walls of the tower were pictured in mosaic work.

had not ventured to invade. The youthful cavaliers, however, were eager to pursue the adventure, and encouraged him in his rash curiosity.

"Come what, come may," exclaimed Don Roderick, "I am resolved to penetrate the mystery of this tower." So saying, he again commanded the guardians to unlock the portal. The ancient men obeyed with fear and trembling, but their hands shook with age, and when they applied the keys the locks were so rusted by time, or of such strange workmanship, that they resisted their feeble efforts, whereupon the young cavaliers pressed forward and lent their aid. Still the locks were so numerous and difficult, that with all their eagerness and strength a great part of the day was exhausted before the whole of them could be mastered.

When the last bolt had yielded to the key, the guardians and the reverend archbishop again entreated the king to pause and reflect. "Whatever is within this tower," said they, "is as yet harmless, and lies bound under a mighty spell; venture not then to open a door which may let forth a flood of evil upon the land." But the anger of the king was roused, and he ordered that the portal should be instantly thrown open. In vain, however,

did one after another exert his strength, and equally in vain, did the cavaliers unite their forces, and apply their shoulders to the gate; though there was neither bar nor bolt remaining, it was perfectly immovable.

The patience of the king was now exhausted, and he advanced to apply his hand; scarcely, however, did he touch the iron gate, when it swung slowly open, uttering, as it were, a dismal groan, as it turned reluctantly upon its hinges. A cold damp wind issued forth, accompanied by a tempestuous sound. The hearts of the ancient guardians quaked within them, and their knees smote together; but several of the youthful cavaliers rushed in, eager to gratify their curiosity, or to signalize themselves in this redoubtable enterprise. They had scarcely advanced a few paces, however, when they recoiled, overcome by the baleful air, or by some fearful vision.* Upon this, the king ordered that fires should be kindled to dispel the darkness, and to correct the noxious and long imprisoned air; he then led the way into the interior; but though stout of heart, he advanced with awe and hesitation.

After proceeding a short distance, he entered a hall or ante-chamber, on the opposite side

*Bleda, *Cronica*, cap. 7.

of which was a door, and before it, on a pedestal, stood a gigantic figure, of the color of bronze and of a terrible aspect. It held a huge mace, which it whirled incessantly, giving such cruel and resounding blows upon the earth as to prevent all further entrance.

The king paused at sight of this appalling figure, for whether it were a living being, or statue of magic artifice, he could not tell. On its breast was a scroll, whereon was inscribed, in large letters, "I do my duty." * After a little while Roderick plucked up heart, and addressed it with great solemnity. "Whatever thou be," said he, "know that I come not to violate this sanctuary, but to inquire into the mystery it contains; I conjure thee, therefore, to let me pass in safety."

Upon this the figure paused with uplifted mace, and the king and his train passed unmolested through the door.

They now entered a vast chamber, of a rare and sumptuous architecture, difficult to be described. The walls were incrusted with the most precious gems, so joined together as to form one smooth and perfect surface. The lofty dome appeared to be self-supported, and was studded with gems, lustrous as the stars

* *Ibid.*

of the firmament. There was neither wood, nor any other common or base material to be seen throughout the edifice. There were no windows or other openings to admit the day, yet a radiant light was spread throughout the place which seemed to shine from the walls and to render every object distinctly visible.

In the centre of this hall stood a table of alabaster, of the rarest workmanship, on which was inscribed, in Greek characters, that Hercules Alcides, the Theban Greek, had founded this tower in the year of the world three thousand and six. Upon the table stood a golden casket, richly set round with precious stones, and closed with a lock of mother-of-pearl, and on the lid were inscribed the following words:

"In this coffer is contained the mystery of the tower. The hand of none but a king can open it; but let him beware! for marvellous events will be revealed to him, which are to take place before his death."

King Roderick boldly seized upon the casket. The venerable archbishop laid his hand upon his arm, and made a last remonstrance. "Forbear, my son," said he; "desist while there is yet time. Look not into the mysterious decrees of Providence. God has hidden them in mercy from our sight, and it is impious to rend the veil by which they are concealed."

"What have I to dread from a knowledge of the future?" replied Roderick, with an air of haughty presumption. "If good be destined me, I shall enjoy it by anticipation; if evil, I shall arm myself to meet it." So saying, he rashly broke the lock.

Within the coffer he found nothing but a linen cloth, folded between two tablets of copper. On unfolding it, he beheld painted on it figures of men on horseback, of fierce demeanor, clad in turbans and robes of various colors, after the fashion of the Arabs, with scimetars hanging from their necks, and crossbows at their saddle-backs, and they carried banners and pennons with divers devices. Above them was inscribed, in Greek characters, "Rash monarch! behold the men who are to hurl thee from thy throne, and subdue thy kingdom!"

At sight of these things the king was troubled in spirit, and dismay fell upon his attendants. While they were yet regarding the paintings, it seemed as if the figures began to move, and a faint sound of warlike tumult arose from the cloth, with the clash of cymbal and bray of trumpet, the neigh of steed and shout of army; but all was heard indistinctly, as if afar off, or in a reverie or dream. The more they gazed, the plainer became the

motion, and the louder the noise; and the linen cloth rolled forth, and amplified, and spread out, as it were, a mighty banner, and filled the hall, and mingled with the air, until its texture was no longer visible, or appeared as a transparent cloud. And the shadowy figures became all in motion, and the din and uproar became fiercer and fiercer; and whether the whole were an animated picture, or a vision, or an array of embodied spirits, conjured up by supernatural power, no one present could tell. They beheld before them a great field of battle, where Christians and Moslems were engaged in deadly conflict. They heard the rush and tramp of steeds, the blast of trump and clarion, the clash of cymbal, and the stormy din of a thousand drums. There was the clash of swords, and maces, and battle-axes, with the whistling of arrows and the hurtling of darts and lances. The Christians quailed before the foe; the infidels pressed upon them and put them to utter rout; the standard of the cross was cast down, the banner of Spain was trodden under foot, the air resounded with shouts of triumph, with yells of fury, and with the groans of dying men. Amidst the flying squadrons King Roderick beheld a crowned warrior, whose back was towards him, but whose armor and device were his own, and

who was mounted on a white steed that resembled his own war-horse Orelia. In the confusion of the flight, the warrior was dismounted, and was no longer to be seen, and Orelia galloped wildly through the field of battle without a rider.

Roderick stayed to see no more, but rushed from the fatal hall, followed by his terrified attendants. They fled through the outer chamber, where the gigantic figure with the whirling mace had disappeared from his pedestal, and, on issuing into the open air, they found the two ancient guardians of the tower lying dead at the portal, as though they had been crushed by some mighty blow. All nature, which had been clear and serene, was now in wild uproar. The heavens were darkened by heavy clouds ; loud bursts of thunder rent the air, and the earth was deluged with rain and rattling hail.

The king ordered that the iron portal should be closed, but the door was immovable, and the cavaliers were dismayed by the tremendous turmoil and the mingled shouts and groans that continued to prevail within. The king and his train hastened back to Toledo, pursued and pelted by the tempest. The mountains shook and echoed with the thunder, trees were uprooted and blown down, and the Tagus

raged and roared and flowed above its banks. It seemed to the affrighted courtiers as if the phantom legions of the tower had issued forth and mingled with the storm; for amidst the claps of thunder and the howling of the wind, they fancied they heard the sound of the drums and trumpets, the shouts of armies, and the rush of steeds. Thus beaten by tempest and overwhelmed with horror, the king and his courtiers arrived at Toledo, clattering across the bridge of the Tagus, and entering the gate in headlong confusion, as though they had been pursued by an enemy.

In the morning the heavens were again serene, and all nature was restored to tranquillity The king, therefore, issued forth with his cavaliers, and took the road to the tower, followed by a great multitude, for he was anxious once more to close the iron door, and shut up those evils that threatened to overwhelm the land. But lo! on coming in sight of the tower, a new wonder met their eyes. An eagle appeared high in the air, seeming to descend from heaven. He bore in his beak a burning brand, and, lighting on the summit of the tower, fanned the fire with his wings. In a little while the edifice burst forth into a blaze, as though it had been built of rosin, and the flames mounted into the air with a brilliancy

more dazzling than the sun; nor did they cease until every stone was consumed, and the whole was reduced to a heap of ashes. Then there came a vast flight of birds, small of size and sable of hue, darkening the sky like a cloud; and they descended, and wheeled in circles round the ashes, causing so great a wind with their wings that the whole was borne up into the air, and scattered throughout all Spain, and wherever a particle of that ashes fell it was as a stain of blood. It is furthermore recorded by ancient men and writers of former days, that all of those on whom this dust fell were afterwards slain in battle, when the country was conquered by the Arabs, and that the destruction of this necromantic tower was a sign and token of the approaching perdition of Spain.

"Let all those," concludes the cautious friar, "who question the verity of this most marvellous occurrence, consult those admirable sources of our history, the chronicle of the Moor Rasis, and the work entitled *The Fall of Spain*, written by the Moor Abulcasim Tarif Abentarique. Let them consult, moreover, the venerable historian Bleda, and the cloud of other Catholic Spanish writers who have treated of this event, and they will find I have related nothing that has not been

printed and published under the inspection and sanction of our holy mother Church. God alone knoweth the truth of these things; I speak nothing but what has been handed down to me from times of old."

Chapter VIII.

Count Julian—His Fortunes in Africa—He Hears of the Dishonor of his Child—His Conduct Thereupon.

THE course of our legendary narration now returns to notice the fortunes of Count Julian, after his departure from Toledo, to resume his government on the coast of Barbary. He left the Countess Frandina at Algeziras, his paternal domain, for the province under his command was threatened with invasion. In fact, when he arrived at Ceuta, he found his post in imminent danger from the all-conquering Moslems. The Arabs of the East, the followers of Mahomet, having subjugated several of the most potent Oriental kingdoms, had established their seat of empire at Damascus, where at this time it was filled by Waled Almanzor, surnamed "The Sword of God." From thence the tide of Moslem conquest had rolled on to the shores

of the Atlantic, so that all Almagreb or Western Africa, had submitted to the standard of the Prophet, with the exception of a portion of Tingitania, lying along the straits—being the province held by the Goths of Spain, and commanded by Count Julian. The Arab invaders were a hundred thousand strong, most of them veteran troops seasoned in warfare and accustomed to victory. They were led by an old Arab general, Muza ben Nosier, to whom was confided the government of Almagreb,—most of which he had himself conquered. The ambition of this veteran was to make the Moslem conquest complete, by expelling the Christians from the African shores; with this view his troops menaced the few remaining Gothic fortresses of Tingitania, while he himself sat down in person before the walls of Ceuta. The Arab chieftain had been rendered confident by continual success, and thought nothing could resist his arms and the sacred standard of the Prophet. Impatient of the tedious delays of a siege, he led his troops boldly against the rock-built towers of Ceuta, and attempted to take the place by storm. The onset was fierce and the struggle desperate; the swarthy sons of the desert were light and vigorous, and of fiery spirit; but the Goths, inured to danger on this frontier, retained the stubborn valor of

Ceuta.

Redrawn from an old print.

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their race, so impaired among their brethren in Spain. They were commanded, too, by one skilled in warfare and ambitious of renown. After a vehement conflict, the Moslem assailants were repulsed from all points, and driven from the walls. Don Julian sallied forth and harassed them in their retreat, and so severe was the carnage that the veteran Muza was fain to break up his camp and retire confounded from the siege.

The victory at Ceuta resounded throughout Tingitania, and spread universal joy. On every side were heard shouts of exultation, mingled with praises of Count Julian. He was hailed by the people, wherever he went, as their deliverer, and blessings were invoked upon his head. The heart of Count Julian was lifted up, and his spirit swelled within him; but it was with noble and virtuous pride, for he was conscious of having merited the blessings of his country.

In the midst of his exultation, and while the rejoicings of the people were yet sounding in his ears, the page arrived who bore the letter from his unfortunate daughter.

"What tidings from the king?" said the count, as the page knelt before him. "None, my lord," replied the youth; "but I bear a letter sent in all haste by the lady Florinda."

He took the letter from his bosom and presented it to his lord. As Count Julian read it, his countenance darkened and fell. "This," said he, bitterly, "is my reward for serving a tyrant; and these are the honors heaped on me by my country while fighting its battles in a foreign land. May evil overtake me, and infamy rest upon my name, if I cease until I have full measure of revenge."

Count Julian was vehement in his passions, and took no council in his wrath. His spirit was haughty in the extreme, but destitute of true magnanimity, and when once wounded, turned to gall and venom. A dark and malignant hatred entered into his soul, not only against Don Roderick, but against all Spain. He looked upon it as the scene of his disgrace, a land in which his family was dishonored, and, in seeking to revenge the wrongs he had suffered from his sovereign, he meditated against his native country one of the blackest schemes of treason that ever entered into the human heart.

The plan of Count Julian was to hurl King Roderick from his throne, and to deliver all Spain into the hands of the infidels. In concerting and executing this treacherous plot, it seemed as if his whole nature was changed; every lofty and generous sentiment was stifled,

and he stooped to the meanest dissimulation. His first object was, to extricate his family from the power of the king and to remove it from Spain before his treason should be known; his next, to deprive the country of its remaining means of defence against an invader.

With these dark purposes at heart, but with an open and serene countenance, he crossed to Spain and repaired to the court at Toledo. Wherever he came he was hailed with acclamation as a victorious general, and appeared in the presence of his sovereign radiant with the victory at Ceuta. Concealing from King Roderick his knowledge of the outrage upon his house, he professed nothing but the most devoted loyalty and affection.

The king loaded him with favors; seeking to appease his own conscience by heaping honors upon the father in atonement of the deadly wrong inflicted upon his child. He regarded Count Julian, also, as a man able and experienced in warfare, and took his advice in all matters relating to the military affairs of the kingdom. The count magnified the dangers that threatened the frontier under his command, and prevailed upon the king to send thither the best horses and arms remaining from the time of Witiza, there being no need of them in the centre of Spain, in its present tranquil

state. The residue, at his suggestion, was stationed on the frontiers of Gallia; so that the kingdom was left almost wholly without defence against any sudden irruption from the south.

Having thus artfully arranged his plans, and all things being prepared for his return to Africa, he obtained permission to withdraw his daughter from the court, and leave her with her mother, the Countess Frandina, who, he pretended, lay dangerously ill at Algeziras. Count Julian issued out of the gate of the city, followed by a shining band of chosen followers, while beside him, on a palfrey, rode the pale and weeping Florinda. The populace hailed and blessed him as he passed, but his heart turned from them with loathing. As he crossed the bridge of the Tagus he looked back with a dark brow upon Toledo, and raised his mailed hand and shook it at the royal palace of King Roderick, which crested the rocky height. "A father's curse," said he, "be upon thee and thine! may desolation fall upon thy dwelling, and confusion and defeat upon thy realm!"

In his journeyings through the country, he looked round him with a malignant eye: the pipe of the shepherd and the song of the husbandman were as discord to his soul; every

sight and sound of human happiness sickened him at heart; and, in the bitterness of his spirit, he prayed that he might see the whole scene of prosperity laid waste with fire and sword by the invader.

The story of domestic outrage and disgrace had already been made known to the Countess Frandina. When the hapless Florinda came in presence of her mother, she fell on her neck, and hid her face on her bosom, and wept; but the countess shed never a tear, for she was a woman haughty of spirit and strong of heart. She looked her husband sternly in the face. "Perdition light upon thy head," said she, "if thou submit to this dishonor. For my own part, woman as I am, I will assemble the followers of my house, nor rest until rivers of blood have washed away this stain."

"Be satisfied," replied the count; "vengeance is on foot, and will be sure and ample."

Being now in his own domains, surrounded by his relatives and friends, Count Julian went on to complete his web of treason. In this he was aided by his brother-in-law, Oppas, the Bishop of Seville,—a man dark and perfidious as the night, but devout in demeanor, and smooth and plausible in council. This artful prelate had contrived to work himself into the entire confidence of the king, and had even

prevailed upon him to permit his nephews, Evan and Siseburto, the exiled sons of Witiza, to return into Spain. They resided in Andalusia, and were now looked to as fit instruments in the present traitorous conspiracy.

By the advice of the Bishop, Count Julian called a secret meeting of his relatives and adherents on a wild rocky mountain, not far from Consuegra, and which still bears the Moorish appellation of "La Sierra de Calderin," or the Mountain of Treason.* When all were assembled, Count Julian appeared among them, accompanied by the bishop and by the Countess Frandina. Then gathering around him those who were of his blood and kindred, he revealed the outrage that had been offered to their house. He represented to them that Roderick was their legitimate enemy; that he had dethroned Witiza, their relation, and had now stained the honor of one of the most illustrious daughters of their line. The Countess Frandina seconded his words. She was a woman majestic in person and eloquent of tongue, and being inspired by a mother's feelings, her speech aroused the assembled cavaliers to fury.

The count took advantage of the excitement

*Bleda, cap. 5.

of the moment to unfold his plan. The main object was to dethrone Don Roderick, and give the crown to the sons of the late King Witiza. By this means they would visit the sins of the tyrant upon his head, and, at the same time, restore the regal honors to their line. For this purpose their own force would be insufficient, but they might procure the aid of Muza ben Nosier, the Arabian general in Mauritania, who would no doubt gladly send a part of his troops into Spain to assist in the enterprise.

The plot thus suggested by Count Julian received the unholy sanction of Bishop Oppas, who engaged to aid it secretly with all his influence and means; for he had great wealth and possessions, and many retainers. The example of the reverend prelate determined all who might otherwise have wavered, and they bound themselves by dreadful oaths to be true to the conspiracy. Count Julian undertook to proceed to Africa, and seek the camp of Muza, to negotiate for his aid, while the bishop was to keep about the person of King Roderick, and lead him into the net prepared for him.

All things being thus arranged, Count Julian gathered together his treasure, and taking his wife and daughter and all his household, abandoned the country he meant to betray,—embarking at Malaga for Ceuta. The gate in the

wall of that city, through which they went forth, continued for ages to bear the name of Puerta de la Cava, or the Gate of the Harlot; for such was the opprobrious and unmerited appellation bestowed by the Moors on the unhappy Florinda. *

* Bleda, cap. 4.

Chapter IX.

Secret Visit of Count Julian to the Arab Camp—First Expedition of Taric el Tuerto.

WHEN Count Julian had placed his family in security in Ceuta, surrounded by soldiery devoted to his fortunes, he took with him a few confidential followers and departed in secret for the camp of the Arabian Emir, Muza ben Nosier. The camp was spread out in one of those pastoral valleys which lie at the feet of the Barbary Hills, with the great range of the Atlas Mountains towering in the distance. In the motley army here assembled were warriors of every tribe and nation that had been united by pact or conquest in the cause of Islam. There were those who had followed Muza from the fertile regions of Egypt, across the deserts of Barca, and those who had joined his standard from among the sunburnt tribes of Mauritania. There were Saracen and Tartar, Syrian and

Copt, and swarthy Moor; sumptuous warriors from the civilized cities of the East, and the gaunt and predatory rovers of the desert. The greater part of the army, however, was composed of Arabs; but differing greatly from the first rude hordes that enlisted under the banner of Mahomet. Almost a century of continual wars with the cultivated nations of the East had rendered them accomplished warriors; and the occasional sojourn in luxurious countries and populous cities, had acquainted them with the arts and habits of civilized life. Still the roving, restless, and predatory habits of the genuine son of Ishmael prevailed, in defiance of every change of clime or situation.

Count Julian found the Arab conqueror Muza surrounded by somewhat of oriental state and splendor. He was advanced in life, but of a noble presence, and concealed his age by tingeing his hair and beard with henna. The count assumed an air of soldier-like frankness and decision when he came into his presence. "Hitherto," said he, "we have been enemies; but I come to thee in peace, and it rests with thee to make me the most devoted of thy friends. I have no longer country or king. Roderick the Goth is an usurper, and my deadly foe; he has wounded

my honor in the tenderest point, and my country affords me no redress. Aid me in my vengeance, and I will deliver all Spain into thy hands,—a land far exceeding in fertility and wealth all the vaunted regions thou hast conquered in Tingitania."

The heart of Muza leaped with joy at these words, for he was a bold and ambitious conqueror, and, having overrun all western Africa, had often cast a wistful eye to the mountains of Spain, as he beheld them brightening beyond the waters of the strait. Still he possessed the caution of a veteran, and feared to engage in an enterprise of such moment, and to carry his arms into another division of the globe, without the approbation of his sovereign. Having drawn from Count Julian the particulars of his plan, and of the means he possessed to carry it into effect, he laid them before his confidential counsellors and officers, and demanded their opinion. "These words of Count Julian," said he, "may be false and deceitful; or he may not possess the power to fulfil his promises. The whole may be a pretended treason to draw us on to our destruction. It is more natural that he should be treacherous to us than to his country."

Among the generals of Muza, was a gaunt, swarthy veteran, scarred with wounds,—a very

Arab, whose great delight was roving and desperate enterprise, and who cared for nothing beyond his steed, his lance, and scimetar. He was a native of Damascus; his name was Taric ben Zeyad, but, from having lost an eye, he was known among the Spaniards by the appellation of Taric el Tuerto, or Taric the One-Eyed.

The hot blood of this veteran Ishmaelite was in a ferment when he heard of a new country to invade and vast regions to subdue, and he dreaded lest the cautious hesitation of Muza should permit the glorious prize to escape them. "You speak doubtingly," said he, "of the words of this Christian cavalier, but their truth is easily to be ascertained. Give me four galleys and a handful of men, and I will depart with this Count Julian, skirt the Christian coast, and bring thee back tidings of the land, and of his means to put it in our power."

The words of the veteran pleased Muza ben Nosier, and he gave his consent; and Taric departed with four galleys, and five hundred men, guided by the traitor Julian.* This first expedition of the Arabs against Spain, took place, according to certain historians, in the

* Beuter, *Cron. Gen. de España*, l. i., c. 28; Marmol, *Descrip. de Africa*, l. ii., c. 10.

year of our Lord seven hundred and twelve; though others differ on this point, as indeed they do upon almost every point in this early period of Spanish history. The date to which the judicious chroniclers incline, is that of seven hundred and ten, in the month of July. It would appear from some authorities, also, that the galleys of Taric cruised along the coasts of Andalusia and Lusitania, under the feigned character of merchant barks, nor is this at all improbable, while they were seeking merely to observe the land, and get a knowledge of the harbors. Wherever they touched, Count Julian despatched emissaries to assemble his friends and adherents at an appointed place. They gathered together secretly at Gezira Alhadra, that is to say, the Green Island, where they held a conference with Count Julian in presence of Taric ben Zeyad.* Here they again avowed their readiness to flock to his standard whenever it should be openly raised, and made known their various preparations for a rebellion. Taric was convinced by all that he had seen and heard, that Count Julian had not deceived them, either as to his disposition or his means to betray his country. Indulging his Arab inclinations, he made an

* Bleda, *Cron.*, c. 5.

inroad into the land, collected great spoil and many captives, and bore off his plunder in triumph to Muza, as a specimen of the riches to be gained by the conquest of the Christian land.*

* Conde, *Hist. Dom. Arab.*, part i., c. 8.

Chapter X.

Letter of Muza to the Caliph—Second Expedition of Taric el Tuerto.

ON hearing the tidings brought by Taric el Tuerto, and beholding the spoil he had collected, Muza wrote a letter to the Caliph Waled Almanzor, setting forth the traitorous proffer of Count Julian, and the probability, through his means, of making a successful invasion of Spain. "A new land," said he, "spreads itself out before our delighted eyes and invites our conquest: a land, too, that equals Syria in the fertility of its soil and the serenity of its sky; Yemen, or Arabia the Happy, in its delightful temperature; India, in its flowers and spices; Hegiaz, in its fruits and flowers; Cathay, in its precious minerals; and Aden, in the excellence of its ports and harbors. It is populous also, and wealthy; having many splendid cities and majestic monuments of ancient art. What is to prevent this

glorious land from becoming the inheritance of the faithful? Already we have overcome the tribes of Berbery, of Zab, of Derar, of Zaara, Mazamuda and Sus, and the victorious standard of Islam floats on the towers of Tangier. But four leagues of sea separate us from the opposite coast. One word from my sovereign, and the conquerors of Africa will pour their legions into Andalusia, rescue it from the domination of the unbeliever, and subdue it to the law of the Koran." *

The Caliph was overjoyed with the contents of the letter. "God is great!" exclaimed he, "and Mahomet is his prophet! It has been foretold by the ambassador of God that his law should extend to the ultimate parts of the West, and be carried by the sword into new and unknown regions. Behold another land is opened for the triumphs of the faithful. It is the will of Allah, and be his sovereign will obeyed." So the Caliph sent missives to Muza, authorizing him to undertake the conquest.

Upon this there was a great stir of preparation, and numerous vessels were assembled and equipped at Tangier to convey the invading army across the straits. Twelve thousand men were chosen for this expedition,—most of

* Conde, part i., c. 8.

them light Arabian troops, seasoned in warfare, and fitted for hardy and rapid enterprise. Among them were many horsemen, mounted on fleet Arabian steeds. The whole was put under the command of the veteran Taric el Tuerto, or the One-Eyed, in whom Muza reposed implicit confidence as in a second self. Taric accepted the command with joy; his martial fire was roused at the idea of having such an army under his sole command, and such a country to overrun, and he secretly determined never to return unless victorious.

He chose a dark night to convey his troops across the Straits of Hercules, and by break of day they began to disembark at Tarifa before the country had time to take the alarm. A few Christians hastily assembled from the neighborhood and opposed their landing, but were easily put to flight. Taric stood on the seaside, and watched until the last squadron had landed, and all the horses, armor, and munitions of war were brought on shore; he then gave orders to set fire to the ships. The Moslems were struck with terror when they beheld their fleet wrapped in flames and smoke, and sinking beneath the waves. "How shall we escape," exclaimed they, "if the fortune of war should be against us?" "There is no escape for the coward," cried Taric; "the

brave man thinks of none; your only chance is victory." "But how without ships shall we ever return to our homes?" "Your homes," replied Taric, "are before you; but you must win them with your swords."

While Taric was yet talking with his followers, says one of the ancient chroniclers, a Christian female was descried waving a white pennon on a reed, in signal of peace. On being brought into the presence of Taric, she prostrated herself before him. "Señor," said she, "I am an ancient woman, and it is now fully sixty years past and gone since, as I was keeping vigils one winter's night by the fireside, I heard my father, who was an exceeding old man, read a prophecy said to have been written by a holy friar; and this was the purport of the prophecy, that a time would arrive when our country would be invaded and conquered by a people from Africa of a strange garb, a strange tongue, and a strange religion. They were to be led by a strong and valiant captain, who would be known by these signs: on his right shoulder he would have a hairy mole, and his right arm would be much longer than the left, and of such length as to enable him to cover his knee with his hand without bending his body."

Taric listened to the old beldame with grave

attention, and when she had concluded, he laid bare his shoulder, and lo! there was the mole as it had been described; his right arm, also, was in verity found to exceed the other in length, though not to the degree that had been mentioned. Upon this the Arab host shouted for joy, and felt assured of conquest.

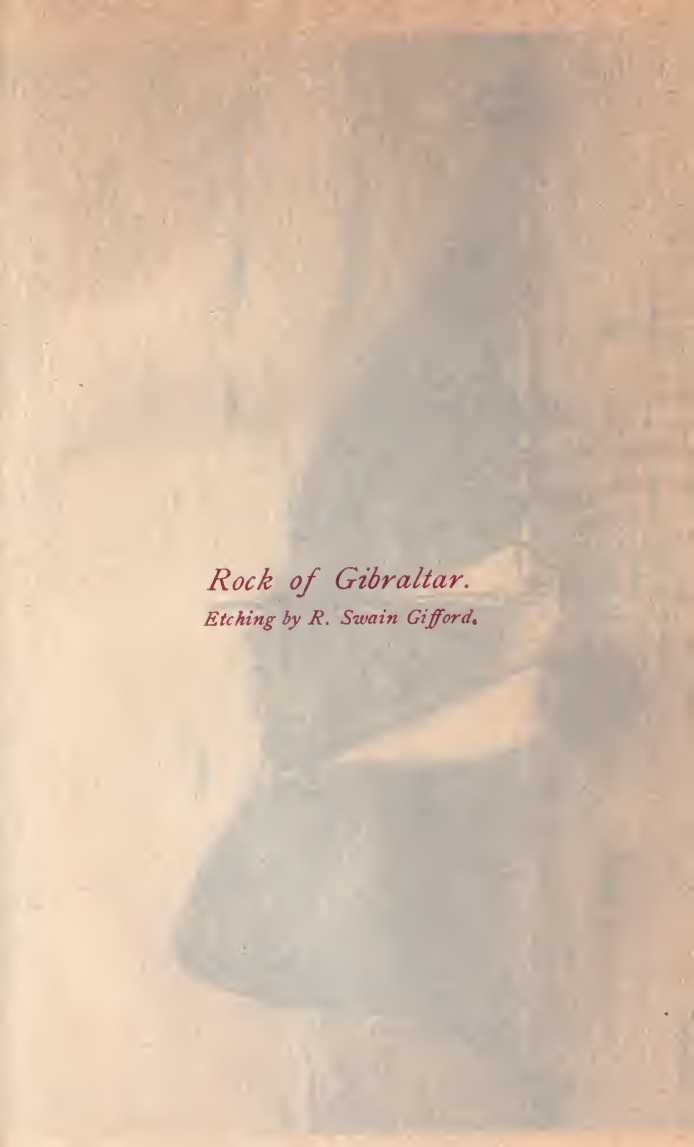
The discreet Antonio Agapida, though he records this circumstance as it is set down in ancient chronicle, yet withholds his belief from the pretended prophecy, considering the whole a cunning device of Taric to increase the courage of his troops. "Doubtless," says he, "there was a collusion between this ancient sibyl and the crafty son of Ishmael; for these infidel leaders were full of damnable inventions to work upon the superstitious fancies of their followers, and to inspire them with a blind confidence in the success of their arms."

Be this as it may, the veteran Taric took advantage of the excitement of his soldiery, and led them forward to gain possession of a stronghold, which was in a manner the key to all the adjacent country. This was a lofty mountain or promontory almost surrounded by the sea, and connected with the mainland by a narrow isthmus. It was called the rock of Calpe, and, like the opposite rock of Ceuta, commanded the entrance to the Mediterra-

nean Sea. Here, in old times, Hercules had set up one of his pillars, and the city of Heraclea had been built.

As Taric advanced against this promontory, he was opposed by a hasty levy of the Christians, who had assembled under the banner of a Gothic noble of great power and importance, whose domains lay along the mountainous coast of the Mediterranean. The name of this Christian cavalier was Theodomir, but he has universally been called Tadmir by the Arabian historians, and is renowned as being the first commander that made any stand against the inroads of the Moslems. He was about forty years of age, hardy, prompt, and sagacious, and had all the Gothic nobles been equally vigilant and shrewd in their defence, the banner of Islam would never have triumphed over the land.

Theodomir had but seventeen hundred men under his command, and these but rudely armed; yet he made a resolute stand against the army of Taric, and defended the pass to the promontory with great valor. He was at length obliged to retreat, and Taric advanced and planted his standard on the rock of Calpe, and fortified it as his stronghold, and as the means of securing an entrance into the land. To commemorate his first victory, he changed



Rock of Gibraltar.
Etching by R. Swain Gifford.

the name of the promontory, and called it Gibel Taric, or the Mountain of Taric, but in process of time the name has gradually been altered to Gibraltar.

In the meantime, the patriotic chieftain Theodomir, having collected his routed forces, encamped with them on the skirts of the mountains, and summoned the country round to join his standard. He sent off missives in all speed to the king, imparting in brief and blunt terms the news of the invasion, and craving assistance with equal frankness. "Señor," said he in his letter, "the legions of Africa are upon us, but whether they come from heaven or earth I know not. They seem to have fallen from the clouds, for they have no ships. We have been taken by surprise, overpowered by numbers, and obliged to retreat, and they have fortified themselves in our territory. Send us aid, Señor, with instant speed, or rather, come yourself to our assistance." *

* Conde, pt. i., c. 9.

Chapter XI.

Measures of Don Roderick on Hearing of the Invasion—Expedition of Ataulpho—Vision of Taric.

WHEN Don Roderick heard that legions of turbaned troops had poured into the land from Africa, he called to mind the visions and predictions of the necromantic tower, and great fear came upon him. But, though sunk from his former hardihood and virtue, though enervated by indulgence, and degraded in spirit by a consciousness of crime, he was resolute of soul, and roused himself to meet the coming danger. He summoned a hasty levy of horse and foot, amounting to forty thousand; but now were felt the effects of the crafty counsel of Count Julian, for the best of the horses and armor intended for the public service had been sent into Africa, and were really in possession of the traitors. Many nobles, it is true, took the field with the sumptuous array with which

they had been accustomed to appear at tournaments and jousts, but most of their vassals were destitute of weapons, and cased in cuirasses of leather, or suits of armor almost consumed by rust. They were without discipline or animation; and their horses, like themselves, pampered by slothful peace, were little fitted to bear the heat, the dust, and toil of long campaigns.

This army Don Roderick put under the command of his kinsman Ataulpho, a prince of the royal blood of the Goths, and of a noble and generous nature; and he ordered him to march with all speed to meet the foe, and to recruit his forces on the way with the troops of Theodomir.

In the meantime, Taric el Tuerto had received large reinforcements from Africa, and the adherents of Count Julian and all those discontented with the sway of Don Roderick had flocked to his standard; for many were deceived by the representations of Count Julian, and thought that the Arabs had come to aid him in placing the sons of Witiza upon the throne. Guided by the count, the troops of Taric penetrated into various parts of the country, and laid waste the land; bringing back loads of spoil to their stronghold at the rock of Calpe.

The Prince Ataulpho marched with his army through Andalusia, and was joined by Theodomir with his troops; he met with various detachments of the enemy foraging the country, and had several bloody skirmishes; but he succeeded in driving them before him, and they retreated to the rock of Calpe, where Taric lay gathered up with the main body of his army.

The prince encamped not far from the bay which spreads itself out before the promontory. In the evening he despatched the veteran Theodomir, with a trumpet, to demand a parley of the Arab chieftain, who received the envoy in his tent, surrounded by his captains. Theodomir was frank and abrupt in speech, for the most of his life had been passed far from courts. He delivered, in round terms, the message of the Prince Ataulpho; upbraiding the Arab general with his wanton invasion of the land, and summoning him to surrender his army or to expect no mercy.

The single eye of Taric el Tuerto glowed like a coal of fire at this message. "Tell your commander," replied he, "that I have crossed the strait to conquer Spain, nor will I return till I have accomplished my purpose. Tell him I have men skilled in war, and armed in proof, with whose aid I trust soon to give a good account of his rabble host."

A murmur of applause passed through the assemblage of Moslem captains. Theodomir glanced on them a look of defiance, but his eye rested on a renegado Christian, one of his own ancient comrades, and a relation of Count Julian. "As to you, Don Graybeard," said he, "you who turn apostate in your declining age, I here pronounce you a traitor to your God, your king, and country; and stand ready to prove it this instant upon your body, if field be granted me."

The traitor knight was stung with rage at these words, for truth rendered them piercing to the heart. He would have immediately answered to the challenge, but Taric forbade it, and ordered that the Christian envoy should be conducted from the camp. "'T is well," replied Theodomir; "God will give me the field which you deny. Let yon hoary apostate look to himself to-morrow in the battle, for I pledge myself to use my lance upon no other foe until it has shed his blood upon the native soil he has betrayed." So saying, he left the camp, nor could the Moslem chieftains help admiring the honest indignation of this patriot knight, while they secretly despised his renegado adversary.

The ancient Moorish chroniclers relate many awful portents and strange and mysterious

visions, which appeared to the commanders of either army during this anxious night. Certainly it was a night of fearful suspense, and Moslem and Christian looked forward with doubt to the fortune of the coming day. The Spanish sentinel walked his pensive round, listening occasionally to the vague sounds from the distant rock of Calpe, and eying it as the mariner eyes the thunder-cloud, pregnant with terror and destruction. The Arabs, too, from their lofty cliffs, beheld the numerous camp-fires of the Christians gradually lighted up, and saw that they were a powerful host; at the same time the night breeze brought to their ears the sullen roar of the sea which separated them from Africa. When they considered their perilous situation,—an army on one side, with a whole nation aroused to reinforce it, and on the other an impassable sea,—the spirits of many of the warriors were cast down, and they repented the day when they had ventured into this hostile land.

Taric marked their despondency, but said nothing. Scarce had the first streak of morning light trembled along the sea, however, when he summoned his principal warriors, to his tent. "Be of good cheer," said he; "Allah is with us, and has sent his Prophet to give assurance of his aid. Scarce had I

retired to my tent last night, when a man of a majestic and venerable presence stood before me." He was taller by a palm than the ordinary race of men, his flowing beard was of a golden hue, and his eyes were so bright that they seemed to send forth flashes of fire. I have heard the Emir Bahamet, and other ancient men, describe the Prophet, whom they had seen many times while on earth, and such was his form and lineament. 'Fear nothing, O Taric, from the morrow,' said he; 'I will be with thee in the fight. Strike boldly, then, and conquer. Those of thy followers who survive the battle will have this land for an inheritance; for those who fall, a mansion in Paradise is prepared, and immortal houries await their coming.' He spake and vanished; I heard a strain of celestial melody, and my tent was filled with the odors of Arabia the Happy." "Such," say the Spanish chroniclers, "was another of the arts by which this arch son of Ishmael sought to animate the hearts of his followers; and the pretended vision has been recorded by the Arabian writers as a veritable occurrence. Marvellous, indeed, was the effect produced by it upon the infidel soldiery, who now cried out with eagerness to be led against the foe."

Chapter XII.

Battle of Calpe—Fate of Ataulpho.

THE gray summits of the rock of Calpe brightened with the first rays of morning as the Christian army issued forth from its encampment. The Prince Ataulpho rode from squadron to squadron, animating his soldiers for the battle. "Never should we sheathe our swords," said he, "while these infidels have a footing in the land. They are pent up within yon rocky mountain; we must assail them in their rugged hold. We have a long day before us; let not the setting sun shine upon one of their host who is not a fugitive, a captive, or a corpse."

The words of the prince were received with shouts, and the army moved towards the promontory. As they advanced, they heard the clash of cymbals and the bray of trumpets, and the rocky bosom of the mountain glit-

tered with helms and spears and scimetars; for the Arabs, inspired with fresh confidence by the words of Taric, were sallying forth, with flaunting banners, to the combat.

The gaunt Arab chieftain stood upon a rock as his troops marched by; his buckler was at his back, and he brandished in his hand a double-pointed spear. Calling upon the several leaders by their names, he exhorted them to direct their attacks against the Christian captains, and especially against Ataulpho; "for the chiefs being slain," said he, "their followers will vanish from before us like the morning mist."

The Gothic nobles were easily to be distinguished by the splendor of their arms, but the Prince Ataulpho was conspicuous above all the rest for the youthful grace and majesty of his appearance and the bravery of his array. He was mounted on a superb Andalusian charger, richly caparisoned with crimson velvet, embroidered with gold. His surcoat was of like color and adornment, and the plumes that waved above his burnished helmet were of the purest white. Ten mounted pages, magnificently attired, followed him to the field, but their duty was not so much to fight as to attend upon their lord, and to furnish him with steed or weapon.

The Christian troops, though irregular and undisciplined, were full of native courage; for the old warrior spirit of their Gothic sires still glowed in their bosoms. There were two battalions of infantry, but Ataulpho stationed them in the rear; "for God forbid," said he, "that foot-soldiers should have the place of honor in the battle, when I have so many valiant cavaliers." As the armies drew nigh to each other, however, it was discovered that the advance of the Arabs was composed of infantry. Upon this the cavaliers checked their steeds, and requested that the foot-soldiery might advance and disperse this losel crew, holding it beneath their dignity to contend with pedestrian foes. The prince, however, commanded them to charge; upon which, putting spurs to their steeds, they rushed upon the foe.

The Arabs stood the shock manfully, receiving the horses upon the points of their lances; many of the riders were shot down with bolts from cross-bows, or stabbed with the poniards, of the Moslems. The cavaliers succeeded, however, in breaking into the midst of the battalion and throwing it into confusion, cutting down some with their swords, transpiercing others with their spears, and trampling many under the hoofs of their horses. At

this moment they were attacked by a band of Spanish horsemen, the recreant partisans of Count Julian. Their assault bore hard upon their countrymen, who were disordered by the contest with the foot-soldiers, and many a loyal Christian knight fell beneath the sword of an unnatural foe.

The foremost among these recreant warriors was the renegado cavalier whom Theodomir had challenged in the tent of Taric. He dealt his blows about him with a powerful arm and with malignant fury, for nothing is more deadly than the hatred of an apostate. In the midst of his career he was espied by the hardy Theodomir, who came spurring to the encounter. "Traitor," cried he, "I have kept my vow. This lance has been held sacred from all other foes to make a passage for thy perjured soul." The renegado had been renowned for prowess before he became a traitor to his country, but guilt will sap the courage of the stoutest heart. When he beheld Theodomir rushing upon him, he would have turned and fled; pride alone withheld him; and, though an admirable master of defence, he lost all skill to ward the attack of his adversary. At the first assault the lance of Theodomir pierced him through and through; he fell to the earth, gnashed his

teeth as he rolled in the dust, but yielded his breath without uttering a word.

The battle now became general, and lasted throughout the morning with varying success. The stratagem of Taric, however, began to produce its effect. The Christian leaders and most conspicuous cavaliers were singled out and severally assailed by overpowering numbers. They fought desperately, and performed miracles of prowess, but fell, one by one, beneath a thousand wounds. Still the battle lingered on throughout a great part of the day, and as the declining sun shone through the clouds of dust, it seemed as if the conflicting hosts were wrapped in smoke and fire.

The Prince Ataulpho saw that the fortune of battle was against him. He rode about the field, calling out the names of the bravest of his knights, but few answered to his call; the rest lay mangled on the field. With this handful of warriors he endeavored to retrieve the day, when he was assailed by Tenderos, a partisan of Count Julian, at the head of a body of recreant Christians. At the sight of this new adversary, fire flashed from the eyes of the prince, for Tenderos had been brought up in his father's palace. "Well dost thou, traitor!" cried he, "to attack the son of thy lord, who

gave thee bread ; thou, who hast betrayed thy country and thy God ! ''

So saying, he seized a lance from one of his pages and charged furiously upon the apostate ; but Tenderos met him in mid career, and the lance of the prince was shivered upon his shield. Ataulpho then grasped his mace, which hung at his saddle-bow, and a doubtful fight ensued. Tenderos was powerful of frame and superior in the use of his weapons, but the curse of treason seemed to paralyze his arm. He wounded Ataulpho slightly between the greaves of his armor, but the prince dealt a blow with his mace that crushed through helm and skull and reached the brain ; and Tenderos fell dead to the earth, his armor rattling as he fell.

At the same moment, a javelin hurled by an Arab transpierced the horse of Ataulpho, which sunk beneath him. The prince seized the reins of the steed of Tenderos, but the faithful animal, as though he knew him to be the foe of his late lord, reared and plunged and refused to let him mount. The prince, however, used him as a shield to ward off the press of foes, while with his sword he defended himself against those in front of him. Taric ben Zeyad arrived at the scene of conflict, and paused for a moment in admiration of the surpassing

prowess of the prince; recollecting, however, that his fall would be a death-blow to his army, he spurred upon him and wounded him severely with his scimetar. Before he could repeat his blow, Theodomir led up a body of Christian cavaliers to the rescue, and Taric was parted from his prey by the tumult of the fight. The prince sank to the earth, covered with wounds and exhausted by the loss of blood. A faithful page drew him from under the hoofs of the horses, and aided by a veteran soldier, an ancient vassal of Ataulpho, conveyed him to a short distance from the scene of battle, by the side of a small stream that gushed out from among rocks. They stanched the blood that flowed from his wounds, and washed the dust from his face, and laid him beside the fountain. The page sat at his head and supported it on his knees, and the veteran stood at his feet, with his brow bent and his eyes full of sorrow. The prince gradually revived, and opened his eyes. "How fares the battle?" said he. "The struggle is hard," replied the soldier, "but the day may yet be ours."

The prince felt that the hour of his death was at hand, and ordered that they should aid him to rise upon his knees. They supported him between them, and he prayed fervently for a short time, when finding his strength declin-

ing, he beckoned the veteran to sit down beside him on the rock. Continuing to kneel, he confessed himself, to that ancient soldier, having no priest or friar to perform that office in this hour of extremity. When he had so done, he sunk again upon the earth and pressed it with his lips, as if he would take a fond farewell of his beloved country. The page would then have raised his head, but found that his lord had yielded up the ghost.

A number of Arab warriors, who came to the fountain to slake their thirst, cut off the head of the prince, and bore it in triumph to Taric, crying, "Behold the head of the Christian leader." Taric immediately ordered that the head should be put upon the end of a lance, together with the surcoat of the prince, and borne about the field of battle, with the sound of trumpets, atabals, and cymbals.

When the Christians beheld the surcoat, and knew the features of the prince, they were struck with horror, and heart and hand failed them. Theodomir endeavored in vain to rally them; they threw by their weapons and fled; and continued to fly, and the enemy to pursue and slay them, until the darkness of the night. The Moslems then returned and plundered the Christian camp, where they found abundant spoil.

Chapter XIII.

Terror of the Country—Roderick Rouses Himself to Arms.

THE scattered fugitives of the Christian army spread terror throughout the land. The inhabitants of the towns and villages gathered around them as they applied at their gates for food, or laid themselves down, faint and wounded, beside the public fountains. When they related the tale of their defeat, old men shook their heads and groaned, and the women uttered cries and lamentations. So strange and unlooked-for a calamity filled them with consternation and despair; for it was long since the alarm of war had sounded in their land, and this was a warfare that carried chains and slavery, and all kinds of horrors in its train.

Don Roderick was seated with his beauteous queen, Exilona, in the royal palace which crowned the rocky summit of Toledo, when

the bearer of ill tidings came galloping over the bridge of the Tagus. "What tidings from the army?" demanded the king, as the panting messenger was brought into his presence. "Tidings of great woe," exclaimed the soldier. "The prince has fallen in battle. I saw his head and surcoat upon a Moorish lance, and the army was overthrown and fled."

At hearing these words, Roderick covered his face with his hands, and for some time sat in silence; and all his courtiers stood mute and aghast, and no one dared to speak a word. In that awful space of time, passed before his thoughts all his errors and his crimes, and all the evils that had been predicted in the necromantic tower. His mind was filled with horror and confusion, for the hour of his destruction seemed at hand; but he subdued his agitation by his strong and haughty spirit; and when he uncovered his face, no one could read on his brow the trouble and agony of his heart. Still every hour brought fresh tidings of disaster. Messenger after messenger came spurring into the city, distracting it with new alarms. The infidels, they said, were strengthening themselves in the land; host after host were pouring in from Africa; the sea-board of Andalusia glittered with spears and scimetars. Bands of turbaned horsemen had overrun the

plains of Sidonia, even to the banks of the Guadiana. Fields were laid waste, towns and cities plundered, the inhabitants carried into captivity, and the whole country lay in smoking desolation.

Roderick heard all these tidings with an undaunted aspect, nor did he ever again betray sign of consternation; but the anxiety of his soul was evident in his war-like preparations. He issued orders that every noble and prelate of his kingdom should put himself at the head of his retainers and take the field, and that every man capable of bearing arms should hasten to his standard, bringing whatever horse and mule and weapon he possessed; and he appointed the plain of Cordova for the place where the army was to assemble. Throwing by, then, all the trappings of his late slothful and voluptuous life, and arming himself for warlike action, he departed from Toledo at the head of his guard, composed of the flower of the youthful nobility. His queen, Exilona, accompanied him, for she craved permission to remain in one of the cities of Andalusia, that she might be near her lord in this time of peril.

Among the first who appeared to hail the arrival of the king at Cordova, was the Bishop Oppas, the secret partisan of the traitor Julian. He brought with him his two nephews, Evan

and Siseburto, the sons of the late King Witiza, and a great host of vassals and retainers, all well armed and appointed; for they had been furnished by Count Julian with a part of the arms sent by the king to Africa. The bishop was smooth of tongue and profound in his hypocrisy; his pretended zeal and devotion, and the horror with which he spoke of the treachery of his kinsman, imposed upon the credulous spirit of the king, and he was readily admitted into his most secret councils.

The alarm of the infidel invasion had spread throughout the land, and roused the Gothic valor of the inhabitants. On receiving the orders of Roderick, every town and hamlet, every mountain and valley, had sent forth its fighting men, and the whole country was on the march towards Andalusia. In a little while there were gathered together, on the plain of Cordova, near fifty thousand horsemen and a countless host of foot-soldiers. The Gothic nobles appeared in burnished armor, curiously inlaid and adorned, with chains and jewels of gold, and ornaments of precious stones, and silken scarfs, and surcoats of brocade, or velvet richly embroidered; betraying the luxury and ostentation into which they had declined from the iron hardihood of their warlike sires. As to the common people, some

had lances and shields and swords and cross-bows, but the greater part were unarmed, or provided merely with slings, and clubs studded with nails, and with the iron implements of husbandry; and many had made shields for themselves from the doors and windows of their habitations. They were a prodigious host, and appeared, say the Arabian chroniclers, like an agitated sea; but, though brave in spirit, they possessed no knowledge of warlike art, and were ineffectual through lack of arms and discipline.

Several of the most ancient and experienced cavaliers, beholding the state of the army, advised Don Roderick to await the arrival of more regular troops, which were stationed in Iberia, Cantabria, and Gallia Gothica; but this counsel was strenuously opposed by the Bishop Oppas; who urged the king to march immediately against the infidels. "As yet," said he, "their number is but limited; but every day new hosts arrive, like flocks of locusts, from Africa. They will augment faster than we; they are living, too, at our expense, and while we pause, both armies are consuming the substance of the land."

King Roderick listened to the crafty counsel of the bishop, and determined to advance without delay. He mounted his war-horse Orelia,

and rode among his troops assembled on that spacious plain, and wherever he appeared he was received with acclamations; for nothing so arouses the spirit of the soldier as to behold his sovereign in arms. He addressed them in words calculated to touch their hearts and animate their courage. "The Saracens," said he, "are ravaging our land, and their object is our conquest. Should they prevail, your very existence as a nation is at an end. They will overturn your altars, trample on the cross, lay waste your cities, carry off your wives and daughters, and doom yourselves and sons to hard and cruel slavery. No safety remains for you but in the prowess of your arms. For my own part, as I am your king, so will I be your leader, and will be the foremost to encounter every toil and danger."

The soldiery answered their monarch with loud acclamations, and solemnly pledged themselves to fight to the last gasp in defence of their country and their faith. The king then arranged the order of their march; all those who were armed with cuirasses and coats of mail were placed in the front and rear; the centre of the army was composed of a promiscuous throng, without body-armor and but scantily provided with weapons.

When they were about to march, the king

called to him a noble cavalier named Ramiro, and, delivering him the royal standard, charged him to guard it well for the honor of Spain; scarcely, however, had the good knight received it in his hand, when he fell dead from his horse, and the staff of the standard was broken in twain. Many ancient courtiers who were present looked upon this as an evil omen, and counselled the king not to set forward on his march that day; but, disregarding all auguries and portents, he ordered the royal banner to be put upon a lance, and gave it in charge of another standard-bearer; then commanding the trumpets to be sounded, he departed at the head of his host to seek the enemy.

The field where this great army assembled was called, from the solemn pledge given by the nobles and the soldiers, *El campo de la verdad;* or, The Field of Truth—a name, says the sage chronicler Abulcasim, which it bears to the present day.*

* *La Perdida de España*, cap. 9; Bleda, l. ii., c. 8.

Chapter XIV.

March of the Gothic Army—Encampment on the Banks of the Guadalete—Mysterious Predictions of a Palmer—Conduct of Pelistes thereupon.

THE hopes of Andalusia revived as this mighty host stretched in lengthening lines along its fertile plains; from morn until night it continued to pour along, with sound of drum and trumpet; it was led on by the proudest nobles and bravest cavaliers of the land, and, had it possessed arms and discipline, might have undertaken the conquest of the world.

After a few days' march, Don Roderick arrived in sight of the Moslem army, encamped on the banks of the Guadalete,* where that beautiful stream winds through the fertile land of Xeres. The infidel host was far inferior in

* This name was given to it subsequently by the Arabs. It signifies the River of Death. *Vide* Pedraza, *Hist. Granad.*, pt. 3, c. 1.

number to the Christians, but then it was composed of hardy and dexterous troops, seasoned to war and admirably armed. The camp shone gloriously in the setting sun, and resounded with the clash of cymbal, the note of the trumpet, and the neighing of fiery Arabian steeds. There were swarthy troops from every nation of the African coast, together with legions from Syria and Egypt, while the light Bedouins were careering about the adjacent plain. What grieved and incensed the spirits of the Christian warriors, however, was to behold, a little apart from the Moslem host, an encampment of Spanish cavaliers, with the banner of Count Julian waving above their tents. They were ten thousand in number, valiant and hardy men, the most experienced of Spanish soldiery, most of them having served in the African wars; they were well armed and appointed, also, with the weapons of which the count had beguiled his sovereign; and it was a grievous sight to behold such good soldiers arrayed against their country and their faith.

The Christians pitched their tents about the hour of vespers, at a short league distant from the enemy, and remained gazing with anxiety and awe upon this barbaric host that had caused such terror and desolation in the land; for the first sight of a hostile encampment in a

country disused to war is terrible to the newly enlisted soldier. A marvellous occurrence is recorded by the Arabian chroniclers as having taken place in the Christian camp ; but discreet Spanish writers relate it with much modification, and consider it a stratagem of the wily Bishop Oppas, to sound the loyalty of the Christian cavaliers.

As several leaders of the army were seated with the bishop in his tent, conversing on the dubious fortunes of the approaching contest, an ancient pilgrim appeared at the entrance. He was bowed down with years, his snowy beard descended to his girdle, and he supported his tottering steps with a palmer's staff. The cavaliers rose and received him with great reverence, as he advanced within the tent. Holding up his withered hand, "Woe, woe to Spain!" exclaimed he, "for the vial of the wrath of Heaven is about to be poured out. Listen, warriors, and take warning. Four months since, having performed my pilgrimage to the sepulchre of our Lord in Palestine, I was on my return towards my native land. Wearied and wayworn, I lay down one night to sleep beneath a palm-tree, by the side of a fountain, when I was awakened by a voice saying unto me, in soft accents, 'Son of sorrow, why sleepest thou?' I opened my eyes,

and beheld one of a fair and beauteous countenance, in shining apparel, and with glorious wings, standing by the fountain; and I said, 'Who art thou who callest upon me in this deep hour of the night?'"

"'Fear not,' replied the stranger; 'I am an angel from heaven, sent to reveal unto thee the fate of thy country. Behold, the sins of Roderick have come up before God, and his anger is kindled against him, and He has given him up to be invaded and destroyed. Hasten then to Spain, and seek the camp of thy countrymen. Warn them that such only shall be saved as shall abandon Roderick; but those who adhere to him shall share his punishment, and shall fall under the sword of the invader.'"

The pilgrim ceased, and passed forth from the tent; certain of the cavaliers followed him to detain him, that they might converse further with him about these matters, but he was nowhere to be found. The sentinel before the tent said, "I saw no one come forth, but it was as if a blast of wind passed by me, and there was a rustling as of dry leaves."

The cavaliers remained looking upon each other with astonishment. The Bishop Oppas sat with his eyes fixed upon the ground, and shadowed by his overhanging brow. At length, breaking silence, in a low and faltering

voice, "Doubtless," said he, "this message is from God; and since He has taken compassion upon us, and given us notice of his impending judgment, it behooves us to hold grave council, and determine how best we may accomplish his will and avert his displeasure."

The chiefs still remained silent, as men confounded. Among them was a veteran noble named Pelistes. He had distinguished himself in the African wars, fighting side by side with Count Julian; but the latter had never dared to tamper with his faith, for he knew his stern integrity. Pelistes had brought with him to the camp his only son, who had never drawn a sword except in tourney. When the young man saw that the veterans held their peace, the blood mantled in his cheek, and, overcoming his modesty, he broke forth with a generous warmth: "I know not, cavaliers," said he, "what is passing in your minds, but I believe this pilgrim to be an envoy from the devil; for none else could have given such dastard and perfidious counsel. For my own part, I stand ready to defend my king, my country, and my faith; I know no higher duty than this, and if God thinks fit to strike me dead in the performance of it, his sovereign will be done!"

When the young man had risen to speak, his father had fixed his eyes upon him with a

grave and stern demeanor, leaning upon a two-handed sword. As soon as the youth had finished, Pelistes embraced him with a father's fondness. "Thou hast spoken well, my son," said he; "if I held my peace at the counsel of this losel pilgrim, it was but to hear thy opinion, and to learn whether thou wert worthy of thy lineage and of the training I had given thee. Hadst thou counselled otherwise than thou hast done,—hadst thou shown thyself craven and disloyal,—so help me God, I would have struck off thy head with this weapon which I hold in my hand. But thou hast counselled like a loyal and a Christian knight, and I thank God for having given me a son worthy to perpetuate the honors of my line. As to this pilgrim, be he saint or be he devil, I care not; this much I promise, that if I am to die in defence of my country and my king, my life shall be a costly purchase to the foe. Let each man make the same resolve, and I trust we shall yet prove the pilgrim a lying prophet." The words of Pelistes roused the spirits of many of the cavaliers; others, however, remained full of anxious foreboding; and when this fearful prophecy was rumored about the camp, as it presently was by the emissaries of the bishop, it spread awe and dismay among the soldiery.

Chapter XV.

Skirmishes of the Armies—Pelistes and his Son—Pelistes and the Bishop.

ON the following day the two armies remained regarding each other with wary but menacing aspect. About noontide King Roderick sent forth a chosen force of five hundred horse and two hundred foot, the best armed of his host, to skirmish with the enemy, that, by gaining some partial advantage, they might raise the spirits of the army. They were led on by Theodomir, the same Gothic noble who had signalized himself by first opposing the invasion of the Moslems.

The Christian squadrons paraded with flying pennons in the valley which lay between the armies. The Arabs were not slow in answering their defiance. A large body of horsemen sallied forth to the encounter, together with three hundred of the followers of Count

Julian. There was hot skirmishing about the field and on the banks of the river; many gallant feats were displayed on either side, and many valiant warriors were slain. As the night closed in, the trumpets from either camp summoned the troops to retire from the combat. In this day's action the Christian suffered greatly in the loss of their distinguished cavaliers; for it is the noblest spirits who venture most, and lay themselves open to danger; and the Moslem soldiers had instructions to single out the leaders of the adverse host. All this is said to have been devised by the perfidious Bishop Oppas, who had secret communications with the enemy, while he influenced the councils of the king; and who trusted that by this skirmishing warfare the flower of the Christian troops would be cut off, and the rest disheartened.

On the following morning a larger force was ordered out to skirmish, and such of the soldiery as were unarmed were commanded to stand ready to seize the horses and strip off the armor of the killed and wounded. Among the most illustrious of the warriors who fought that day was Pelistes, the Gothic noble who had so sternly checked the tongue of the Bishop Oppas. He led to the field a large body of his own vassals and retainers, and of cavaliers

trained up in his house, who had followed him to the wars in Africa, and who looked up to him more as a father then a chieftain. Beside him was his only son, who now for the first time was fleshing his sword in battle. The conflict that day was more general and bloody than the day preceding; the slaughter of the Christian warriors was immense, from their lack of defensive armor; and as nothing could prevent the flower of the Gothic chivalry from spurring to the combat, the field was strewed with the bodies of the youthful nobles. None suffered more, however, than the warriors of Pelistes. Their leader himself was bold and hardy, and prone to expose himself to danger; but years and experience had moderated his early fire; his son, however, was eager to distinguish himself in this, his first essay, and rushed with impetuous ardor into the hottest of the battle. In vain his father called to caution him; he was ever in the advance, and seemed unconscious of the perils that surrounded him. The cavaliers and vassals of his father followed him with devoted zeal, and many of them paid for their loyalty with their lives. When the trumpets sounded in the evening for retreat, the troops of Pelistes were the last to reach the camp. They came slowly and mournfully, and much decreased in number. Their veteran

commander was seated on his war-horse, but the blood trickled from the greaves of his armor. His valiant son was borne on the shields of his vassals; when they laid him on the earth near to where the king was standing, they found that the heroic youth had expired of his wounds. The cavaliers surrounded the body, and gave utterance to their grief, but the father restrained his agony, and looked on with the stern resignation of a soldier.

Don Roderick surveyed the field of battle with a rueful eye, for it was covered with the mangled bodies of his most illustrious warriors; he saw, too, with anxiety, that the common people, unused to war and unsustained by discipline, were harassed by incessant toils and dangers, and were cooling in their zeal and courage.

The crafty Bishop Oppas marked the internal trouble of the king, and thought a favorable moment had arrived to sway him to his purpose. He called to his mind the various portents and prophecies which had forerun their present danger. "Let not my lord the king," said he, "make light of these mysterious revelations, which appear to be so disastrously fulfilling. The hand of Heaven appears to be against us. Destruction is impending over our heads. Our troops are rude and unskilful,

but slightly armed, and much cast down in spirit. Better is it that we should make a treaty with the enemy, and by granting part of his demands, prevent the utter ruin of our country. If such council be acceptable to my lord the king, I stand ready to depart upon an embassy to the Moslem camp."

Upon hearing these words, Pelistes, who had stood in mournful silence, regarding the dead body of his son, burst forth with honest indignation. By this good sword, said he, "the man who yields such dastard counsel deserves death from the hand of his countrymen rather than from the foe; and, were it not for the presence of the king, may I forfeit salvation if I would not strike him dead upon the spot."

The bishop turned an eye of venom upon Pelistes. "My lord," said he, "I, too, bear a weapon, and know how to wield it. Were the king not present you would not dare to menace, nor should you advance one step without my hastening to meet you."

The king interposed between the jarring nobles, and rebuked the impetuosity of Pelistes, but at the same time rejected the counsel of the bishop. "The event of this conflict," said he, "is in the hand of God; but never shall my sword return to its scabbard, while an infidel invader remains within the land."

He then held a counsel with his captains, and it was determined to offer the enemy general battle on the following day. A herald was despatched defying Taric ben Zeyad to the contest, and the defiance was gladly accepted by the Moslem chieftain.* Don Roderick then formed the plan of action, and assigned to each commander his several station, after which he dismissed his officers, and each one sought his tent, to prepare by diligence or repose for the next day's eventful contest.

* Bleda, *Cronica.*

Chapter XVII.

Traitorous Message of Count Julian.

TARIC BEN ZEYAD had been surprised by the valor of the Christian cavaliers in the recent battles, and at the number and apparent devotion of the troops which accompanied the king to the field. The confident defiance of Don Roderick increased his surprise. When the herald had retired, he turned an eye of suspicion on Count Julian. "Thou hast represented thy countrymen," said he, "as sunk in effeminacy and lost to all generous impulse; yet I find them fighting with the courage and strength of lions. Thou hast represented thy king as detested by his subjects and surrounded by secret treason; but I behold his tents whitening the hills and dales, while thousands are hourly flocking to his standard. Woe unto thee if thou hast dealt deceitfully with us, or betrayed us with guileful words."

Don Julian retired to his tent in great trouble

of mind, and fear came upon him that the Bishop Oppas might play him false; for it is the lot of traitors ever to distrust each other. He called to him the same page who had brought him the letter from Florinda, revealing, the story of her dishonor.

"Thou knowest, my trusty page," said he, "that I have reared thee in my household, and cherished thee above all thy companions. If thou hast loyalty and affection for thy lord, now is the time to serve him. Hie thee to the Christian camp, and find thy way to the tent of the Bishop Oppas. If any one ask thee who thou art, tell them thou art of the household of the bishop, and bearer of missives from Cordova. When thou art admitted to the presence of the bishop, show him this ring, and he will commune with thee in secret. Then tell him Count Julian greets him as a brother, and demands how the wrongs of his daughter Florinda are to be redressed. Mark well his reply, and bring it word for word. Have thy lips closed, but thine eyes and ears open; and observe everything of note in the camp of the king. So, speed thee on thy errand—away, away!"

The page hastened to saddle a Barbary steed, fleet as the wind, and of a jet black color, so as not to be easily discernible in the night.

He girded on a sword and dagger, slung an Arab bow with a quiver of arrows at his side, and a buckler at his shoulder. Issuing out of the camp, he sought the banks of the Guadalete, and proceeded silently along its stream, which reflected the distant fires of the Christian camp. As he passed by the place which had been the scene of the recent conflict, he heard from time to time the groan of some expiring warrior who had crawled among the reeds on the margin of the river, and sometimes his steed stepped cautiously over the mangled bodies of the slain. The young page was unused to the sights of war, and his heart beat quick within him. He was hailed by the sentinels as he approached the Christian camp, and, on giving the reply taught him by Count Julian, was conducted to the tent of the Bishop Oppas.

The bishop had not yet retired to his couch. When he beheld the ring of Count Julian, and heard the words of his message, he saw that the page was one in whom he might confide. "Hasten back to thy lord," said he, and tell him to have faith in me and all shall go well. As yet I have kept my troops out of the combat. They are all fresh, well armed, and well appointed. The king has confided to myself, aided by the princes Evan and Siseburto, the

command of a wing of the army. To-morrow, at the hour of noon, when both armies are in the heat of action, we will pass over with our forces to the Moslems. But I claim the compact made with Taric ben Zeyad, that my nephews be placed in dominion over Spain, and tributary only to the Caliph of Damascus." With this traitorous message the page departed. He led his black steed by the bridle, to present less mark for observation, as he went stumbling along near the expiring fires of the camp. On passing the last outpost, where the guards were half slumbering on their arms, he was overheard and summoned, but leaped lightly into the saddle and put spurs to his steed. An arrow whistled by his ear, and two more stuck in the target which he had thrown upon his back. The clatter of swift hoofs echoed behind him, but he had learnt of the Arabs to fight and fly. Plucking a shaft from his quiver, and turning and rising in the stirrups as his courser galloped at full speed, he drew the arrow to the head and launched it at his pursuer. The twang of the bow-string was followed by the crash of armor, and a deep groan, as the horseman tumbled to the earth. The page pursued his course without further molestation, and arrived at the Moslem camp before the break of day.

Chapter XVII.

Last Day of The Battle.

A LIGHT had burned throughout the night in the tent of the king, and anxious thoughts and dismal visions troubled his repose. If he fell into a slumber, he beheld in his dreams the shadowy phantoms of the necromantic tower, or the injured Florinda, pale and disheveled, imprecating the vengeance of Heaven upon his head. In the mid-watches of the night, when all was silent except the footstep of the sentinel pacing before his tent, the king rose from his couch, and walking forth, looked thoughtfully upon the martial scene before him. The pale crescent of the moon hung over the Moorish camp, and dimly lighted up the windings of the Guadalete. The heart of the king was heavy and oppressed; but he felt only for himself, says Antonio Agapida; he thought nothing of the perils impending over the thousands

of devoted subjects in the camp below him; sleeping, as it were, on the margin of their graves. The faint clatter of distant hoofs, as if in rapid flight, reached the monarch's ear, but the horsemen were not to be descried. At that very hour, and along the shadowy banks of that river, here and there gleaming with the scanty moonlight, passed the fugitive messenger of Count Julian, with the plan of the next day's treason.

The day had not yet dawned when the sleepless and impatient monarch summoned his attendants and arrayed himself for the field. He then sent for the venerable Bishop Urbino, who had accompanied him to the camp, and, laying aside his regal crown, he knelt with head uncovered, and confessed his sins before the holy man. After this a solemn mass was performed in the royal tent, and the eucharist administered to the monarch. When these ceremonies were concluded, he besought the archbishop to depart forthwith for Cordova, there to await the issue of the battle, and to be ready to bring forward reinforcements and supplies. The archbishop saddled his mule and departed just as the faint blush of morning began to kindle in the east. Already the camp resounded with the thrilling call of the trumpet, the clank of armor,

and the tramp and neigh of steeds. As the archbishop passed through the camp, he looked with a compassionate heart on this vast multitude, of whom so many were soon to perish. The warriors pressed to kiss his hand, and many a cavalier full of youth and fire received his benediction, who was to lie stiff and cold before the evening.

When the troops were marshalled for the field, Don Roderick prepared to sally forth in the state and pomp with which the Gothic kings were wont to go to battle. He was arrayed in robes of gold brocade; his sandals were embroidered with pearls and diamonds; he had a sceptre in his hand, and he wore a regal crown resplendent with inestimable jewels. Thus gorgeously appareled, he ascended a lofty chariot of ivory, the axletrees of which were of silver, and the wheels and pole covered with plates of burnished gold. Above his head was a canopy of cloth of gold, embossed with armorial devices, and studded with precious stones.* This sumptuous chariot was drawn by milk-white horses, with caparisons of crimson velvet, embroidered with pearls. A thousand youthful cavaliers surrounded the car, all of the noblest blood

* Entrand., *Chron. an Chris.*, 714.

and bravest spirit; all knighted by the king's own hand, and sworn to defend him to the last.

When Roderick issued forth in this resplendent state, says an Arabian writer, surrounded by his guards in gilded armor and waving plumes and scarfs and surcoats of a thousand dyes, it was as if the sun were emerging in the dazzling chariot of the day from amidst the glorious clouds of morning.

As the royal car rolled along in front of the squadrons, the soldiers shouted with admiration. Don Roderick waved his sceptre and addressed them from his lofty throne, reminding them of the horror and desolation which had already been spread through the land by the invaders. He called upon them to summon up the ancient valor of their race, and avenge the blood of their brethren. "One day of glorious fighting," said he, "and this infidel horde will be driven into the sea or will perish beneath your swords. Forward bravely to the fight; your families are behind you praying for your success; the invaders of your country are before you; God is above to bless his holy cause, and your king leads you to the field." The army shouted with one accord, "Forward to the foe, and death be his portion who shuns the encounter!"

The rising sun began to shine along the glistening waters of the Guadalete as the Moorish army, squadron after squadron, came sweeping down a gentle declivity to the sound of martial music. Their turbans and robes, of various dyes and fashions, gave a splendid appearance to their host; as they marched, a cloud of dust arose and partly hid them from the sight, but still there would break forth flashes of steel and gleams of burnished gold, like rays of vivid lightning; while the sound of drum and trumpet, and the clash of Moorish cymbal, were as the warlike thunder within that stormy cloud of battle.

As the armies drew near each other, the sun disappeared among gathering clouds, and the gloom of the day was increased by the columns of dust which rose from either host. At length the trumpets sounded for the encounter. The battle commenced with showers of arrows, stones, and javelins. The Christian foot-soldiers fought to disadvantage, the greater part being destitute of helm or buckler. A battalion of light Arabian horsemen, led by a Greek renegado named Maguel el Rumi, careered in front of the Christian line, launching their darts, and then wheeling off beyond the reach of the missiles hurled after them. Theodomir now brought up his seasoned troops

into the action, seconded by the veteran Pelistes, and in a little while the battle became furious and promiscuous. It was glorious to behold the old Gothic valor shining forth in this hour of fearful trial. Wherever the Moslems fell, the Christians rushed forward, seized upon their horses, and stripped them of their armor and their weapons. They fought desperately and successfully, for they fought for their country and their faith. The battle raged for several hours; the field was strewn with slain, and the Moors, overcome by the multitude and fury of their foes, began to falter.

When Taric beheld his troops retreating before the enemy, he threw himself before them, and, rising in his stirrups, "O Moslems! conquerors of Africa!" cried he, "whither would you fly? The sea is behind you, the enemy before; you have no hope but in your valor and the help of God! Do as I do, and the day is ours!"

With these words he put spurs to his horse and sprung among the enemy, striking to right and left, cutting down and destroying, while his steed, fierce as himself, trampled upon the foot-soldiers, and tore them with his teeth. At this moment a mighty shout arose in various parts of the field; the noontide hour had arrived. The Bishop Oppas, with the two

princes, who had hitherto kept their bands out of the fight, suddenly went over to the enemy, and turned their weapons upon their astonished countrymen. From that moment the fortune of the day was changed, and the field of battle became a scene of wild confusion and bloody massacre. The Christians knew not whom to contend with, or whom to trust. It seemed as if madness had seized upon their friends and kinsmen, and that their worst enemies were among themselves.

The courage of Don Roderick rose with his danger. Throwing off the cumbrous robes of royalty, and descending from his car, he sprang upon his steed Orelia, grasped his lance and buckler, and endeavored to rally his retreating troops. He was surrounded and assailed by a multitude of his own traitorous subjects, but defended himself with wondrous prowess. The enemy thickened around him; his loyal band of cavaliers were slain, bravely fighting in his defence; the last that was seen of the king was in the midst of the enemy, dealing death at every blow.

A complete panic fell upon the Christians; they threw away their arms and fled in all directions. They were pursued with dreadful slaughter, until the darkness of the night rendered it impossible to distinguish friend

from foe. Taric then called off his troops from the pursuit, and took possession of the royal camp; and the couch which had been pressed so uneasily on the preceding night by Don Roderick, now yielded sound repose to his conqueror.*

*This battle is called indiscriminately by historians the battle of Guadalete, or of Xeres, from the neighborhood of that city.

Chapter XVIII.

The Field of Battle after the Defeat—The Fate of Roderick.

ON the morning after the battle, the Arab leader, Taric ben Zeyad, rode over the bloody field of the Guadalete, strewed with the ruins of those splendid armies which had so lately passed like glorious pageants along the river banks. There Moor and Christian, horseman and horse, lay gashed with hideous wounds; and the river, still red with blood, was filled with the bodies of the slain. The gaunt Arab was as a wolf roaming through the fold he had laid waste. On every side his eye revelled on the ruin of the country, on the wrecks of haughty Spain. There lay the flower of her youthful chivalry, mangled and destroyed, and the strength of her yeomanry prostrated in the dust. The Gothic noble lay confounded with his vassals, the peasant with the prince—all ranks and dignities were mingled in one bloody massacre.

When Taric had surveyed the field, he caused the spoils of the dead and the plunder of the camp to be brought before him. The booty was immense. There were massy chains and rare jewels of gold, pearls and precious stones, rich silks and brocades, and all other luxurious decorations in which the Gothic nobles had indulged in the latter times of their degeneracy. A vast amount of treasure was likewise found, which had been brought by Roderick for the expenses of the war.

Taric then ordered that the bodies of the Moslem warriors should be interred; as for those of the Christians, they were gathered in heaps, and vast pyres of wood were formed, on which they were consumed. The flames of these pyres rose high in the air, and were seen afar off in the night; and when the Christians beheld them from the neighboring hills, they beat their breasts and tore their hair, and lamented over them as over the funeral fires of their country. The carnage of that battle infected the air for two whole months, and bones were seen lying in heaps upon the field for more than forty years; nay, when ages had passed and gone, the husbandman, turning up the soil, would still find fragments of Gothic cuirasses and helms, and Moorish scimetars, the relics of that dreadful fight.

For three days the Arabian horsemen pursued the flying Christians, hunting them over the face of the country, so that but a scanty number of that mighty host escaped to tell the tale of their disaster.

Taric ben Zeyad considered his victory incomplete so long as the Gothic monarch survived; he proclaimed great rewards, therefore, to whomsoever should bring Roderick to him, dead or alive. A diligent search was accordingly made in every direction, but for a long time in vain; at length a soldier brought to Taric the head of a Christian warrior, on which was a cap decorated with feathers and precious stones. The Arab leader received it as the head of the unfortunate Roderick, and sent it, as a trophy of his victory, to Muza ben Nosier, who, in like manner, transmitted it to the Caliph at Damascus. The Spanish historians, however, have always denied its identity.

A mystery has ever hung, and ever must continue to hang, over the fate of King Roderick, in that dark and doleful day of Spain. Whether he went down amidst the storm of battle, and atoned for his sins and errors by a patriot grave, or whether he survived to repent of them in hermit exile, must remain matter of conjecture and dispute. The learned Archbishop Rodrigo, who has recorded the events

of this disastrous field, affirms that Roderick fell beneath the vengeful blade of the traitor Julian, and thus expiated with his blood his crime against the hapless Florinda; but the archbishop stands alone in his record of the fact. It seems generally admitted that Orelia, the favorite war-horse of Don Roderick, was found entangled in a marsh on the borders of the Guadalete, with the sandals and mantle and royal insignia of the king lying close by him. The river at this place ran broad and deep, and was encumbered with the dead bodies of warriors and steeds; it has been supposed, therefore, that he perished in the stream; but his body was not found within its waters.

When several years had passed away, and men's minds, being restored to some degree of tranquillity, began to occupy themselves about the events of this dismal day, a rumor arose that Roderick had escaped from the carnage on the banks of the Guadalete, and was still alive. It was said that having from a rising ground caught a view of the whole field of battle, and seen that the day was lost, and his army flying in all directions, he likewise sought his safety in flight. It is added that the Arab horsemen, while scouring the mountains in quest of fugitives, found a shepherd arrayed in the royal robes, and brought him

before the conqueror, believing him to be the king himself. Count Julian soon dispelled the error. On being questioned, the trembling rustic declared that while tending his sheep in the folds of the mountains, there came a cavalier on a horse wearied and spent and ready to sink beneath the spur. That the cavalier with an authoritative voice and menacing air commanded him to exchange garments with him, and clad himself in his rude garb of sheepskin, and took his crook and his scrip of provisions, and continued up the rugged defiles of the mountains leading towards Castile, until he was lost to view.*

This tradition was fondly cherished by many, who clung to the belief in the existence of their monarch as their main hope for the redemption of Spain. It was even affirmed that he had taken refuge, with many of his host, in an island of the "Ocean sea," from whence he might yet return once more to elevate his standard, and battle for the recovery of his throne.

Year after year, however, elapsed, and nothing was heard of Don Roderick; yet, like Sebastian of Portugal and Arthur of England, his name continued to be a rallying-point for popular faith, and the mystery of his end to

* Bleda, *Cron.*, l. ii., c. 9. Abulcasim Tarif Abentarique, l. i., c. 10.

give rise to romantic fables. At length, when generation after generation had sunk into the grave, and near two centuries had passed and gone, traces were said to be discovered that threw a light on the final fortunes of the unfortunate Roderick. At that time Don Alphonso the Great, king of Leon, had wrested the city of Viseo in Lusitania from the hands of the Moslems. As his soldiers were ranging about the city and its environs, one of them discovered in a field, outside of the walls, a small chapel or hermitage, with a sepulchre in front, on which was inscribed this epitaph in Gothic characters:

HIC REQUIESCIT RUDERICUS,
ULTIMUS REX GOTHORUM.*

It has been believed by many that this was the veritable tomb of the monarch, and that in this hermitage he had finished his days in solitary penance. The warrior, as he contemplated the supposed tomb of the once haughty Roderick, forgot all his faults and errors, and shed a soldier's tear over his memory; but when his thoughts turned to Count Julian, his patriotic indignation broke forth, and with his dagger he inscribed a rude malediction on the stone.

* Here lies Roderick,
The last king of the Goths.

"Accursed," said he, "be the impious and headlong vengeance of the traitor Julian. He was a murderer of his king, a destroyer of his kindred, a betrayer of his country. May his name be bitter in every mouth, and his memory infamous to all generations."

Here ends the legend of Don Roderick.

Illustrations of the Foregoing Legend.

THE TOMB OF RODERICK.

The venerable Sebastiano, Bishop of Salamanca, declares that the inscription on the tomb at Viseo in Portugal existed in his time, and that he had seen it. A particular account of the exile and hermit life of Roderick is furnished by Berganza, on the authority of Portuguese chronicles.

"Algunos historiadores Portugueses asseguran, que el Rey Rodrigo, perdida la battalla, huyo a tierra de Merida, y se recogio en el monasterio de Cauliniano, en donde, arrependido de sus culpas, procuro confessarlas con muchas lagrimas. Deseando mas retiro, y escogiendo por compañero a un monge llamado Roman, y elevando la Imagen de Nazareth, que Cyriaco monge de nacion griego avra traido de Jerusalem al monasterio de Cauliniano, se subio á un monte muy aspero, que estaba sobre el mar, junto al lugar de Pederneyra. Vivio Rodrigo en compania de el

monge en el hueco de una gruta por espacio de un año; despues se passo à la ermita de san Miguel, que estaba cerca de Viseo, en donde murio y fue sepultado.

"Puedese ver esta relacion en las notas de Don Thomas Tamayo sobre Paulo deacano. El chronicon de san Millan, que llega hasta el año 883, deze que, hasta su tiempo, si ignora el fin del Rey Rodrigo. Pocos años despues el Rey Don Alonzo el Magno, aviéndo ganado la ciudad de Viseo, encontro en una iglesia el epitafio que en romance dize—aqui yaze, Rodrigo, ultimo Rey de los Godos."—*Berganza*, l. i., c. 13.

THE CAVE OF HERCULES.

As the story of the necromantic tower is one of the most famous as well as least credible points in the history of Don Roderick, it may be well to fortify or buttress it by some account of another marvel of the city of Toledo. This ancient city, which dates its existence almost from the time of the flood, claiming as its founder Tubal, the son of Japhet, and grandson of Noah,* has been the warrior hold of many generations and a strange diversity of races. It bears traces of the artifices and devices of its various occupants, and is full of mysteries and subjects for antiquarian conjecture and perplexity. It is built upon a high rocky promontory, with the Tagus brawling round its

* Salazar, *Hist. Gran. Cardinal. Prologo*, vol. i., plan. 1.

base, and is overlooked by cragged and precipitous hills. These hills abound with clefts and caverns; and the promontory itself, on which the city is built, bears traces of vaults and subterraneous habitations, which are occasionally discovered under the ruins of ancient houses, or beneath the churches and convents.

These are supposed by some to have been the habitations or retreats of the primitive inhabitants; for it was the custom of the ancients, according to Pliny, to make caves in high and rocky places, and live in them through fear of floods; and such a precaution, says the worthy Don Pedro de Roxas, in his history of Toledo, was natural enough among the first Toledans, seeing that they founded their city shortly after the deluge, while the memory of it was still fresh in their minds.

Some have supposed these secret caves and vaults to have been places of concealment of the inhabitants and their treasure during times of war and violence; or rude temples for the performance of religious ceremonies in times of persecution. There are not wanting other, and grave writers, who give them a still darker purpose. In these caves, say they, were taught the diabolical mysteries of magic; and here were performed those infernal ceremonies and incantations horrible in the eyes of God and man. "History," says the worthy Don Pedro de Roxas, "is full of accounts that the magi taught and performed their

magic and their superstitious rites in profound caves and secret places; because as this art of the devil was prohibited from the very origin of Christianity, they always sought for hidden places in which to practice it." In the time of the Moors this art, we are told, was publicly taught at their universities, the same as astronomy, philosophy, and mathematics, and at no place was it cultivated with more success than at Toledo. Hence this city has ever been darkly renowned for mystic science; insomuch that the magic art was called by the French, and by other nations the Arte Toledana.

Of all the marvels, however, of this ancient, picturesque, romantic, and necromantic city, none in modern times surpass the Cave of Hercules, if we may take the account of Don Pedro de Roxas for authentic. The entrance to this cave is within the church of San Gines, situated in nearly the highest part of the city. The portal is secured by massy doors, opening within the walls of the church, but which are kept rigorously closed. The cavern extends under the city and beneath the bed of the Tagus to the distance of three leagues beyond. It is, in some places, of rare architecture, built of small stones curiously wrought, and supported by columns and arches.

In the year 1546 an account of this cavern was given to the archbishop and Cardinal Don Juan Martinez Siliceo, who, desirous of examining it, ordered

the entrance to be cleaned. A number of persons, furnished with provisions, lanterns, and cords, then went in, and, having proceeded about half a league, came to a place where there was a kind of chapel or temple, having a table or altar, with several statues of bronze in niches or on pedestals.

While they were regarding this mysterious scene of ancient worship or incantation, one of the statues fell, with a noise that echoed through the cavern, and smote the hearts of the adventurers with terror. Recovering from their alarm they proceeded onward, but were soon again dismayed by a roaring and rushing sound that increased as they advanced. It was made by a furious and turbulent stream, the dark waters of which were too deep and broad and rapid to be crossed. By this time their hearts were so chilled with awe, and their thoughts so bewildered, that they could not seek any other passage by which they might advance; so they turned back and hastened out of the cave. It was nightfall when they sallied forth, and they were so much affected by the terror they had undergone, and by the cold and damp air of the cavern, to which they were the more sensible from its being in the summer, that all of them fell sick and several of them died. Whether the archbishop was encouraged to pursue his research and gratify his curiosity, the history does not mention.

Alonzo Telles de Meneses, in his history of the

world, records that not long before his time a boy of Toledo, being threatened with punishment by his master, fled and took refuge in this cave. Fancying his pursuer at his heels, he took no heed of the obscurity or coldness of the cave, but kept groping and blundering forward, until he came forth at three leagues' distance from the city.

Another and very popular story of this cave, current among the common people, was, that in its remote recesses lay concealed a great treasure of gold, left there by the Romans. Whoever would reach this precious hoard must pass through several caves or grottoes; each having its particular terror, and all under the guardianship of a ferocious dog, who has the key of all the gates, and watches day and night. At the approach of any one, he shows his teeth, and makes a hideous growling; but no adventurer after wealth has had courage to brave a contest with this terrific Cerberus.

The most intrepid candidate on record was a poor man who had lost his all, and had those grand incentives to desperate enterprise, a wife and a large family of children. Hearing the story of this cave, he determined to venture alone in search of the treasure. He accordingly entered, and wandered many hours, bewildered, about the cave. Often would he have returned, but the thoughts of his wife and children urged him on. At length he arrived near to the

place where he supposed the treasure lay hidden ; but here, to his dismay, he beheld the floor of the cavern strewn with human bones, doubtless the remains of adventurers like himself, who had been torn to pieces.

Losing all courage, he now turned and sought his way out of the cave. Horrors thickened upon him as he fled. He beheld direful phantoms glaring and gibbering around him, and heard the sound of pursuit in the echoes of his footsteps. He reached his home overcome with affright ; several hours elapsed before he could recover speech to tell his story, and he died on the following day.

The judicious Don Pedro de Roxas holds the account of the buried treasure for fabulous, but the adventure of this unlucky man for very possible—being led on by avarice, or rather the hope of retrieving a desperate fortune. He, moreover, pronounces his dying shortly after coming forth as very probable; because the darkness of the cave, its coldness, the fright at finding the bones, the dread of meeting the imaginary dog, all joining to operate upon a man who was past the prime of his days, and enfeebled by poverty and scanty food, might easily cause his death.

Many have considered this cave as intended originally for a sally or retreat from the city in case it should be taken ; an opinion rendered probable, it is thought, by its grandeur and great extent.

The learned Salazar de Mendoza, however, in his

history of the grand cardinal of Spain, affirms it as an established fact, that it was first wrought out of the rock by Tubal, the son of Japhet, and grandson of Noah, and afterwards repaired and greatly augmented by Hercules the Egyptian, who made it his habitation after he had erected his pillars at the straits of Gibraltar. Here, too, it is said, he read magic to his followers, and taught them those supernatural arts by which he accomplished his vast achievements. Others think that it was a temple dedicated to Hercules, as was the case, according to Pomponius Mela, with the great cave in the rock of Gibraltar; certain it is, that it has always borne the name of "The Cave of Hercules."

There are not wanting some who have insinuated that it was a work dating from the time of the Romans, and intended as a cloaca or sewer of the city; but such a groveling insinuation will be treated with proper scorn by the reader, after the nobler purposes to which he has heard this marvellous cavern consecrated.

From all the circumstances here adduced from learned and reverend authors, it will be perceived that Toledo is a city fruitful of marvels, and that the necromantic tower of Hercules has more solid foundation than most edifices of similar import in ancient history.

The writer of these pages will venture to add the

result of his personal researches respecting the far-famed cavern in question. Rambling about Toledo in the year 1826, in company with a small knot of antiquity hunters, among whom were an eminent British painter,* and an English nobleman,† who has since distinguished himself in Spanish historical research, we directed our steps to the church of San Gines, and inquired for the portal of the secret cavern. The sacristan was a voluble and communicative man, and one not likely to be niggard of his tongue about anything he knew, or slow to boast of any marvel pertaining to his church ; but he professed utter ignorance of the existence of any such portal. He remembered to have heard, however, that immediately under the entrance to the church there was an arch of mason work, apparently the upper part of some subterranean portal ; but that all had been covered up and a pavement laid down thereon ; so that whether it led to the magic cave or the necromantic tower remains a mystery, and so must remain until some monarch or archbishop shall again have courage and authority to break the spell.

* Mr. D. W—kie. † Lord Mah—n.

The Legend of Pelayo

THE LEGEND OF PELAYO.

Chapter I.

Obscurity of the Ancient Chronicles—The Loves of Doña Lucia and the Duke Favila—Birth of Pelayo, and What Happened Thereupon—His Early Fortunes, and his Tutelage under the Veteran Count Grafeses.

IT is the common lamentation of Spanish historians that, in the obscure and melancholy space of time which succeeded the perdition of their country, its history is a mere wilderness of dubious facts, wild exaggerations, and evident fables. Many learned men in cells and cloisters have passed their lives in the weary and fruitless task of attempting to correct incongruous events and reconcile absolute contradictions. The worthy Jesuit Petro Abarca confesses that for more than forty years, during which he had been employed in theo-

logical controversies, he had never found any questions so obscure and inexplicable as those rising out of this portion of Spanish history; and that the only fruit of an indefatigable, prolix, and even prodigious study of the subject, was a melancholy and mortifying indecision.*

Let us console ourselves, therefore, in our attempts to thread this mazy labyrinth with the reflection that, if we occasionally err and become bewildered, we do but share the errors and perplexities of our graver and more laborious predecessors; and that, if we occasionally stray into the flowery by-ways of fanciful tradition, we are as likely to arrive at the truth as those who travel by more dry and dusty but not more authenticated paths.

We premise these suggestions before proceeding to cull, from the midst of the fables and extravagances of ancient chronicles, a few particulars of the story of Pelayo, the deliverer of Spain; whose name, like that of William Wallace, the hero of Scotland, will ever be linked with the glory of his country; but linked, like his, by a band in which fact and fiction are indissolubly mingled.

In the ensuing pages it is our intention

* Abarca, *Anales de Aragon.* Ante regno, § 2.

to give little more than an abstract of an old chronicle teeming with extravagances, yet containing facts of admitted credibility, and presenting pictures of Spanish life, partly sylvan, partly chivalrous, which have all the quaint merit of the curious delineations in old tapestry.

The origin of Pelayo is wrapped in great obscurity, though all writers concur in making him of royal Gothic lineage. The chronicle in question makes Pelayo the offspring of a love affair in the court of Ezica, one of the last of the Gothic kings, who held his seat of government at Toledo. Among the noble damsels brought up in the royal household was the beautiful Lucia, niece and maid of honor to the queen. A mutual passion subsisted between her and Favila, the youthful Duke of Cantabria, one of the most accomplished cavaliers of the kingdom. The Duke, however, had a powerful rival in the Prince Witiza, son to the king, and afterwards known, for the profligacy of his reign, by the name of Witiza the Wicked. The prince to rid himself of a favored rival, procured the banishment of Favila to his estates in Cantabria ; not, however, before he had been happy in his loves in stolen interviews with the fair Lucia. The cautious chronicler, however, lets us know that a kind of espousal took place,

by the lovers plighting their faith with solemn vows before an image of the Virgin, and as the image gave no sign of dissent by way of forbidding the bans, the worthy chronicler seems to consider them as good as man and wife.

After the departure of the duke, the prince renewed his suit with stronger hope of success, but met with a repulse which converted his love into implacable and vengeful hate.

The beautiful Lucia continued in attendance on the queen, but soon became sensible of the consequences of her secret and informal nuptials so tacitly sanctioned by the Virgin. In the process of time, with great secrecy, she gave birth to a male child, whom she named Pelayo. For fifteen days the infant was concealed in her apartment, and she trusted all was safe, when, to her great terror, she learned that her secret had been betrayed to Prince Witiza, and that search was to be made for the evidence of her weakness.

The dread of public scorn and menace of a cruel death overcame even the feelings of a mother. Through means of a trusty female of her chamber she procured a little ark, so constructed as to be impervious to water She then arrayed her infant in costly garments, wrapping it in a mantle of rich brocade, and when about to part with it, kissed it many

times, and laid it in her lap, and wept over it. At length the child was borne away by the Dueña of her chamber and a faithful handmaid. It was dark midnight when they conveyed it to the borders of the Tagus, where it washes the rocky foundations of Toledo. Covering it from the dew and night air, they committed the ark to the eddying current, which soon swept it from the shore. As it glided down the rapid stream, says the ancient chronicle, they could mark its course even in the darkness of the night; for it was surrounded by a halo of celestial light.* They knew not how to account for this prodigy, says the same authentic writer, until they remembered that the mother had blessed the child with the sign of the cross, and had baptized it with her own hand. Others, however, explain this marvel differently; for in this child, say they, was centered the miraculous light which was afterwards to shine forth with comfort and deliverance in the darkest hour of Spain.

The chronicle quoted by Fray Antonio Agapida goes on to state what befell the fair Lucia after the departure of the child. Her apartments were searched at early dawn, but no

* El Moro Rasis, *La Destruycion de España*. Rojas, *Hist. Toledo*, pt. ii., l. iv., cl.

proof appeared to substantiate the charges made against her. The Prince Witiza persisted in accusing her publicly of having brought disgrace upon her line by her frailty. A cavalier of the court, suborned by him, supported the accusation by an oath, and offered to maintain the truth of it by his sword. A month was granted by the king for the afflicted lady to find a champion, and a day appointed for the lists; if none appeared, or if her champion were overcome, she was to be considered guilty and put to death. The day arrived, the accusing knight was on the ground in complete armor, proclamation was made, but no one stepped forward to defend the lady. At length a trumpet sounded; an unknown knight, with visor closed, entered the lists. The combat was long and doubtful, for it would appear as if the Holy Virgin was not perfectly satisfied with the nature of the espousals which had taken place before her image. At length the accusing knight was overcome and slain, to the great joy of the court and all the spectators, and the beautiful Lucia was pronounced as immaculate as the Virgin, her protectress.

The unknown champion of course proved to be the Duke of Cantabria. He obtained a pardon of the king for returning from banishment without the royal permission; what is

more, he obtained permission formally to espouse the lady whose honor he had so gallantly established. Their nuptials were solemnized in due form and with great magnificence, after which he took his blooming bride to his castle in Cantabria, to be out of reach of the persecutions of the Prince Witiza.

Having made this brief abstract of what occupies many a wordy page in the ancient chronicle, we return to look after the fortunes of the infant Pelayo, when launched upon the waves in the darkness of the night.

The ark containing this future hope of Spain, continues the old chronicle, floated down the current of the Golden Tagus, where that renowned river winds through the sylvan solitudes of Estremadura. All night, and throughout the succeeding day and the following night, it made its tranquil way : the stream ceased its wonted turbulence and dimpled round it ; the swallow circled round it with lively chirp and sportive wing, the breezes whispered musically among the reeds, which bowed their tall heads as it passed ; such was the bland influence of the protection of the Virgin.

Now, so it happened that at this time there lived in a remote part of Estremadura an ancient cavalier, a hale and hearty bachelor, named the Count Grafeses. He had been a

warrior in his youth, but now, in a green and vigorous old age, had retired from camp and court to a domain on the banks of the Tagus, inherited from his Gothic ancestors. His great delight was in the chase, which he followed successfully in the vast forests of Estremadura. Every morning heard the woods resounding with the melody of hound and horn ; and the heads of stags, of wolves, and wild boars vied in his castle hall with the helms and bucklers and lances, and the trophies of his youthful and martial days.

The jovial count was up at early dawn pursuing a boar in the thick forest bordering the Tagus, when he beheld the little ark floating down the stream. He ordered one of his huntsmen to strip and enter the river and bring the ark to land. On opening it, he was surprised to behold within an infant wrapped in costly robes, but pale and wan, and apparently almost exhausted. Beside it was a purse of gold, and on its bosom a cross of rubies and a parchment scroll, on which was written, "Let this infant be honorably entertained ; he is of illustrious lineage ; his name is Pelayo."

The good count shrewdly surmised the cause of this perilous exposure of a helpless infant. He had a heart kind and indulgent

toward the weaker sex, as the heart of a genial old bachelor is prone to be; and while he looked with infinite benevolence upon the beauteous child, felt a glow of compassion for the unknown mother. Commanding his huntsman to be silent as to what he had witnessed, he took the infant in his arms and returned with it to his castle.

Now, so it happened that the wife of his steward had, about a week before, been delivered of a child which lived but a very few days, leaving the mother in great affliction. The count gave her the infant, and the money found with it, and told her the story of the ark, with a strong injunction of secrecy, entreating her to take charge of the child and rear it as her own. The good woman doubted the story, and strongly suspected her master of having fallen into an error in his old age; she received the infant, however, as a gift from Heaven, sent to console her in her affliction, and pressed it with tears to her bosom, for she thought of the child she had lost.

Pelayo, therefore, was reared on the banks of the Tagus as the offspring of the steward and his wife, and the adopted son of the count. That veteran cavalier bore in mind, however, that his youthful charge was of illustrious lineage, and took delight in accomplishing him

in all things befitting a perfect hidalgo. He placed him astride of a horse almost as soon as he could walk; a lance and cross-bow were his earliest playthings, and he was taught to hunt the small game of the forest until strong enough to accompany the count in his more rugged sports. Thus he was inured to all kinds of hardy exercises, and rendered heedless of danger and fatigue. Nor was the discipline of his mind neglected. Under the instructions of a neighboring friar, he learned to read in a manner that surprised the erudition of his foster-father; for he could con more correctly all the orisons of the Virgin, and listened to mass, and attended all the ceremonies of the Church, with a discretion truly exemplary. Some ancient chroniclers have gone so far as to say that he even excelled in clerkly craft; but this is most likely a fond exaggeration.

Time glided by. King Ezica was gathered to his fathers, and his son Witiza reigned in his stead. All the chivalry of the kingdom was summoned to Toledo to give splendor to his coronation. The good old count prepared, among the rest, to appear at a court from which he had long been absent. His ancient serving-men were arrayed in the antiquated garbs in which they had figured in his days of

youthful gallantry, and his household troops in the battered armor which had seen hard service in the field, but which had long rusted in the armory. He determined to take with him his adopted son Pelayo, now seven years of age. A surcoat was made for him from the mantle of rich brocade in which he had been found wrapped in the ark. A palfrey was also caparisoned for him in warlike style. It was a rare sight, says the old chronicler, to see the antiquated chivalry of the good Count Grafeses parading across the bridge of the Tagus, or figuring in the streets of Toledo, in contrast to the silken and shining retinues of the more modern courtiers; but the veteran was hailed with joy by many of the ancient nobles, his early companions in arms. The populace, too, when they beheld the youthful Pelayo ambling by his side on his gentle palfrey, were struck with the chivalrous demeanor of the boy, and the perfect manner in which he managed his steed.

Chapter II.

What Happened to Pelayo at the Court of Witiza.

AMONG the nobles, continues the old chronicle, who appeared in Toledo to do homage to the new king was Favila, Duke of Cantabria. He left his wife in their castle among the mountains,—for the fair Lucia was still in the meridian of her beauty, and he feared lest the sight of her might revive the passion of Witiza. They had no other fruit of their union but a little daughter of great beauty, called Lucinda, and they still mourned in secret the loss of their first-born. The duke was related to Count Grafeses; and when he first beheld Pelayo his heart throbbed, he knew not why, and he followed him with his eyes in all his youthful sports. The more he beheld him the more his heart yearned toward him, and he entreated the count to grant him the youth for a time as a page, to be reared by him in all the offices of

chivalry, as was the custom in the houses of warlike nobles in those days.

The count willingly complied with his request, knowing the great prowess of the Duke of Cantabria, who was accounted a mirror of knightly virtue. "For my own part," said he, "I am at present but little capable of instructing the boy; for many years have passed since I gave up the exercise of arms, and little am I worth at present excepting to blow the horn and follow the hound."

When the ceremonies of the coronation were over, therefore, the Duke of Cantabria departed for his castle, accompanied by the young Pelayo and the count, for the good old cavalier could not yet tear himself from his adopted child.

As they drew near the castle, the duchess came forth with a grand retinue; for they were as petty sovereigns in their domains. The duke presented Pelayo to her as her page, and the youth knelt to kiss her hand, but she raised him and kissed him on the forehead; and as she regarded him the tears stood in her eyes.

"God bless thee, gentle page," said she, "and preserve thee to the days of manhood; for thou hast in thee the promise of an accomplished cavalier; joyful must be the heart of the mother who can boast of such a son!"

On that day, when the dinner was served with becoming state, Pelayo took his place among the other pages in attendance, who were all children of nobles; but the duchess called him to her as her peculiar page. He was arrayed in his surcoat of brocade, made from the mantle in which he had been folded in the ark, and round his neck hung the cross of rubies.

As the duchess beheld these things, she turned pale and trembled. "What is the name of thy son," said she to Count Grafeses. "His name," replied the count, "is Pelayo." "Tell me of a truth," demanded she, still more earnestly, "is this indeed thy son?" The count was not prepared for so direct a question. "Of a truth," said he, "he is but the son of my adoption; yet he is of noble lineage." The duchess again addressed him with tenfold solemnity. "On thy honor as a knight, do not trifle with me; who are the parents of this child?" The count, moved by her agitation, briefly told the story of the ark. When the duchess heard it she gave a great sigh and fell as one dead. On reviving, she embraced Pelayo with mingled tears and kisses, and proclaimed him as her long-lost son.

Chapter III.

How Pelayo Lived among the Mountains of Cantabria—His Adventure with the Needy Hidalgo of Gascony and the Rich Merchant of Bordeaux—Discourse of the Holy Hermit.

THE authentic Agapida passes over many pages of the ancient chronicle narrating the early life of Pelayo, presenting nothing of striking importance. His father, the Duke of Cantabria, was dead, and he was carefully reared by his widowed mother at a castle in the Pyrenees, out of the reach of the dangers and corruptions of the court. Here that hardy and chivalrous education was continued which had been commenced by his veteran foster-father on the banks of the Tagus. The rugged mountains around abounded with the bear, the wild boar, and the wolf, and in hunting these he prepared himself for the conflicts of the field.

The old chronicler records an instance of his

early prowess in the course of one of his hunting expeditions on the immediate borders of France. The mountain passes and the adjacent lands were much infested and vexed by marauders from Gascony. The Gascons, says the worthy Agapida, were a people ready to lay their hands upon everything they met. They used smooth words when necessary, but force when they dared. Though poor, they were proud: there was not one who did not plume himself upon being a hijo de algo, or son of somebody. Whenever Pelayo, therefore, hunted on the borders infested by these, he was attended by a page conducting his horse, with his buckler and lance, to be at hand in case of need.

At the head of a band of fourteen of these self-styled hidalgos of Gascony was a broken-down cavalier by the name of Arnaud. He and four of his comrades were well armed and mounted, the rest were mere scamper-grounds on foot, armed with darts and javelins. This band was the terror of the border; here to-day, gone to-morrow; sometimes in one pass of the mountains, sometimes in another; sometimes they made descents into Spain, harassing the roads and marauding the country, and were over the mountains again and into France before a force could be sent against them.

It so happened that while Pelayo with a number of his huntsmen was on the border, this Gascon cavalier and his crew were on the maraud. They had heard of a rich merchant of Bordeaux who was to pass through the mountains on his way to one of the ports of Biscay, with which several of his vessels traded, and that he would carry with him much money for the purchase of merchandise. They determined to ease him of his money-bags; for, being hidalgos who lived by the sword, they considered all peaceful men of trade as lawful spoil, sent by Heaven for the supply of men of valor and gentle blood.

As they waylaid a lonely defile they beheld the merchant approaching. He was a fair and portly man, whose looks bespoke the good cheer of his native city. He was mounted on a stately and well-fed steed; beside him on palfreys paced his wife, a comely dame, and his daughter, a damsel of marriageable age, and fair to look upon. A young man, his nephew, who acted as his clerk, rode with them, and a single domestic followed.

When the travellers had advanced within the defile, the bandeleros rushed from behind a rock and set upon them. The nephew fought valiantly and was slain; the servant fled; the merchant, though little used to the

exercise of arms, and of unwieldy bulk, made courageous defence, having his wife and daughter and his money-bags at hazard. He was wounded in two places and over-powered.

The freebooters were disappointed at not finding the booty they expected, and putting their swords to the breast of the merchant, demanded where was the money with which he was to traffic in Biscay. The trembling merchant informed them that a trusty servant was following him at no great distance with a stout hackney laden with bags of money. Overjoyed at this intelligence, they bound their captives to trees and awaited the arrival of the treasure.

In the meantime Pelayo was on a hill near a narrow pass, awaiting a wild boar which his huntsmen were to rouse. While thus posted the merchant's servant, who had escaped, came running in breathless terror, but fell on his knees before Pelayo and craved his life in the most piteous terms, supposing him another of the robbers. It was some time before he could be persuaded of his mistake and made to tell the story of the robbery. When Pelayo heard the tale, he perceived that the robbers in question must be the Gascon hidalgos upon the scamper. Taking his armor from the page, he put on his helmet, slung his buckler

round his neck, took lance in hand, and mounting his horse, compelled the trembling servant to guide him to the scene of the robbery. At the same time he despatched his page to summon as many of his huntsmen as possible to his assistance.

When the robbers saw Pelayo advancing through the forest, the sun sparkling upon his rich armor, and saw that he was attended by a single page, they considered him a new prize, and Arnaud and two of his companions mounting their horses advanced to meet him. Pelayo put himself in a narrow pass between two rocks, where he could only be attacked in front, and, bracing his buckler and lowering his lance, awaited their coming.

"Who and what are ye," cried he, "and what seek ye in this land?"

"We are huntsmen," cried Arnaud, "in quest of game; and lo! it runs into our toils."

"By my faith," said Pelayo, "thou wilt find the game easier roused than taken; have at thee for a villain."

So saying, he put spurs to his horse and charged upon him. Arnaud was totally unprepared for so sudden an assault, having scarce anticipated a defence. He hastily couched his lance, but it merely glanced on the shield of Pelayo, who sent his own through the

middle of his breast, and threw him out of his saddle to the earth. One of the other robbers made at Pelayo and wounded him slightly in the side, but received a blow on the head which cleft his skull-cap and sank into his brain. His companion, seeing him fall, galloped off through the forest.

By this time three or four of the robbers on foot had come up, and assailed Pelayo. He received two of their darts on his buckler, a javelin razed his cuirass, and his horse received two wounds. Pelayo then rushed upon them and struck one dead; the others, seeing several huntsmen advancing, took to flight; two were overtaken and made prisoners, the rest escaped by clambering among rocks and precipices.

The good merchant of Bordeaux and his family beheld this scene with trembling and amazement. They almost looked upon Pelayo as something more than mortal, for they had never witnessed such feats of arms. Still they considered him as a leader of some rival band of robbers, and when he came up and had the bands loosened by which they were fastened to the trees, they fell at his feet and implored for mercy. It was with difficulty he could pacify their fears; the females were soonest reassured, especially the daughter, for the young maid

was struck with the gentle demeanor and noble countenance of Pelayo, and said to herself, surely nothing wicked can dwell in so heavenly a form.

Pelayo now ordered that the wounds of the merchant should be dressed, and his own examined. When his cuirass was taken off, his wound was found to be but slight; but his men were so exasperated at seeing his blood, that they would have put the two captive Gascons to death had he not forbade them. He now sounded his hunting-horn, which echoed from rock to rock, and was answered by shouts and horns from various parts of the mountains. The merchant's heart misgave him; he again thought he was among robbers; nor were his fears allayed when he beheld in a little while more than forty men assembling together from various parts of the forest, clad in hunting-dresses, with boar-spears, darts, and hunting-swords, and each leading a hound by a long cord. All this was a new and a wild world to the astonished merchant, nor was his uneasiness abated when he beheld his servant arrive leading the hackney laden with money. Certainly, said he to himself, this will be too tempting a spoil for these wild men of the mountains.

The huntsmen brought with them a boar,

which they had killed, and being hungry from the chase, they lighted a fire at the foot of a tree, and each cutting such portion of the boar as he liked best, roasted it at the fire, and ate it with bread taken from his wallet. The merchant, his wife, and daughter looked at all this and wondered, for they had never beheld so savage a repast. Pelayo then inquired of them if they did not desire to eat. They were too much in awe of him to decline, though they felt a loathing at the idea of this hunter's fare. Linen cloths were therefore spread under the shade of a great oak, to screen them from the sun; and when they had seated themselves round it, they were served, to their astonishment, not with the flesh of the boar, but with dainty viands, such as the merchant had scarcely hoped to find out of the walls of his native city of Bordeaux.

While they were eating, the young damsel, the daughter of the merchant, could not keep her eyes from Pelayo. Gratitude for his protection, admiration of his valor, had filled her heart; and when she regarded his noble countenance, now that he had laid aside his helmet, she thought she beheld something divine. The heart of the tender Donzella, says the old historian, was kind and yielding; and had Pelayo thought fit to ask the greatest boon that love

and beauty could bestow,—doubtless meaning her own fair hand,—she would not have had the cruelty to say him nay. Pelayo, however, had no such thought. The love of woman had never yet entered in his heart; and though he regarded the damsel as the fairest maiden he had ever beheld, her beauty caused no perturbation in his breast.

When the repast was over, Pelayo offered to conduct the merchant and his family through the passes of the mountains, which were yet dangerous from the scattered band of Gascons. The bodies of the slain marauders were buried, and the corpse of the nephew of the merchant was laid upon one of the horses captured in the battle. They then formed their cavalcade and pursued their way slowly up one of the steep and winding defiles of the Pyrenees.

Towards sunset they arrived at the dwelling of a holy hermit. It was hewn out of the solid rock, a cross was over the door, and before it was a spreading oak, with a sweet spring of water at its foot. Here the body of the merchant's nephew was buried, close by the wall of this sacred retreat, and the hermit performed a mass for the repose of his soul. Pelayo then obtained leave from the holy father that the merchant's wife and daughter should pass the night within his cell; and the hermit made

beds of moss for them and gave them his benediction; but the damsel found little rest, so much were her thoughts occupied by the youthful cavalier who had delivered her from death or dishonor.

When all were buried in repose, the hermit came to Pelayo, who was sleeping by the spring under the tree, and he awoke him and said, "arise, my son, and listen to my words." Pelayo arose and seated himself on a rock, and the holy man stood before him, and the beams of the moon fell on his silvery hair and beard, and he said: "This is no time to be sleeping; for know that thou art chosen for a great work. Behold the ruin of Spain is at hand, destruction shall come over it like a cloud, and there shall be no safeguard. For it is the will of Heaven that evil shall for a time have sway, and whoever withstands it shall be destroyed. But tarry thou not to see these things, for thou canst not relieve them. Depart on a pilgrimage, and visit the sepulchre of our blessed Lord in Palestine, and purify thyself by prayer, and enrol thyself in the order of chivalry, and prepare for the work of the redemption of thy country. When thou shalt return, thou wilt find thyself a stranger in the land. Thy residence will be in wild dens and caves of the earth,

A Pass in the Pyrenees.

Redrawn from an old print.

which thy young foot has never trodden. Thou wilt find thy countrymen harboring with the beasts of the forest and the eagles of the mountains. The land which thou leavest smiling with corn-fields, and covered with vines and olives, thou wilt find overrun with weeds and thorns and brambles; and wolves will roam where there have been peaceful flocks and herds. But thou wilt weed out the tares, and destroy the wolves, and raise again the head of thy suffering country."

Much further discourse had Pelayo with this holy man, who revealed to him many of the fearful events that were to happen, and counselled him the way in which he was to act.

When the morning sun shone upon the mountains, the party assembled round the door of the hermitage, and made a repast by the fountain under the tree. Then, having received the benediction of the hermit, they departed, and travelled through the forests and defiles of the mountain, in the freshness of the day; and when the merchant beheld his wife and daughter thus secure by his side, and the hackney laden with his treasure following close behind him, his heart was light in his bosom, and he carolled as he went. But Pelayo rode in silence, for his mind was deeply

moved by the revelations and the counsel of the hermit; and the daughter of the merchant ever and anon regarded him with eyes of tenderness and admiration, and deep sighs spoke the agitation of her bosom.

At length they came to where the forests and the rocks terminated, and a secure road lay before them; and here Pelayo paused to take his leave, appointing a number of his followers to attend and guard them to the nearest town.

When they came to part, the merchant and his wife were loud in their thanks and benedictions; but for some time the daughter spake never a word. At length she raised her eyes, which were filled with tears, and looked wistfully at Pelayo, and her bosom throbbed, and after a struggle between strong affection and virgin modesty her heart relieved itself by words.

"Señor," said she, "I know that I am humble and unworthy of the notice of so noble a cavalier, but suffer me to place this ring on a finger of your right hand, with which you have so bravely rescued us from death; and when you regard it, you shall consider it as a memorial of your own valor, and not of one who is too humble to be remembered by you." With these words she drew a ring from off her

finger and put it upon the finger of Pelayo; and having done this, she blushed and trembled at her own boldness, and stood as one abashed, with her eyes cast down upon the earth.

Pelayo was moved at her words, and at the touch of her fair hand, and at her beauty as she stood thus troubled and in tears before him; but as yet he knew nothing of woman, and his heart was free from the snares of love. "Amiga" (friend), said he, "I accept thy present, and will wear it in remembrance of thy goodness." The damsel was cheered by these words, for she hoped she had awakened some tenderness in his bosom; but it was no such thing, says the ancient chronicler, for his heart was ignorant of love, and was devoted to higher and more sacred matters; yet certain it is, that he always guarded well that ring.

They parted, and Pelayo and his huntsmen remained for some time on a cliff on the verge of the forest, watching that no evil befell them about the skirts of the mountain; and the damsel often turned her head to look at him, until she could no longer see him for the distance and the tears that dimmed her eyes.

And, for that he had accepted her ring, she considered herself wedded to him in her heart, and never married; nor could be brought to

look with eyes of affection upon any other man, but for the true love which she bore Pelayo she lived and died a virgin. And she composed a book, continues the old chronicler, which treated of love and chivalry, and the temptations of this mortal life,—and one part discoursed of celestial things,—and it was called the "Contemplations of Love;" because at the time she wrote it she thought of Pelayo, and of his having received her jewel, and called her by the gentle name of "Amiga;" and often thinking of him, and of her never having beheld him more, in tender sadness she would take the book she had written, and would read it for him, and, while she repeated the words of love which it contained, she would fancy them uttered by Pelayo, and that he stood before her.*

*El Moro Rasis, *Destruycion de España*, pt. ii., c. 101.

Chapter IV.

Pilgrimage of Pelayo, and What Befell Him on his Return to Spain.

PELAYO, according to the old chronicle, before quoted, returned to his home deeply impressed with the revelations made to him by the saintly hermit, and prepared to set forth upon the pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre. Some historians have alleged that he was quickened to this pious expedition by fears of violence from the wicked King Witiza; but at this time Witiza was in his grave, and Roderick swayed the Gothic sceptre; the sage Agapida is therefore inclined to attribute the pilgrimage to the mysterious revelation already mentioned.

Having arranged the concerns of his household, chosen the best suit of armor from his armory, and the best horse from his stable, and supplied himself with jewels and store of gold for his expenses, he took leave of his

mother and his sister Lucinda, as if departing upon a distant journey in Spain, and, attended only by his page, set out upon his holy wayfaring. Descending from the rugged Pyrenees, he journeyed through the fair plains of France to Marseilles, where, laying by his armor, and leaving his horses in safe keeping, he put on a pilgrim's garb, with staff and scrip and cockle-shell, and embarked on board of a galley bound for Sicily. From Messina he voyaged in a small bark to Rhodes; thence in a galliot, with a number of other pilgrims, to the Holy Land. Having passed a year of pious devotion at the Holy Sepulchre, and visited all the places rendered sacred by the footsteps of our Lord, and of his mother the ever blessed Virgin, and having received the order of knighthood, he turned his steps toward his native land.

The discreet Agapida here pauses and forbears to follow the ancient chronicler further in his narration, for an interval of obscurity now occurs in the fortunes of Pelayo. Some who have endeavored to ascertain, and connect the links of his romantic and eventful story, have represented him as returning from his pilgrimage in time to share in the last struggle of his country, and as signalizing himself in the fatal battle on the banks of the Guadalete.

Others declare that by the time he arrived in Spain the perdition of the country was complete; that infidel chieftains bore sway in the palaces of his ancestors; that his paternal castle was a ruin, his mother in her grave, and his sister Lucinda carried away into captivity.

Stepping lightly over this disputed ground, the cautious Agapida resumes the course of the story where Pelayo discovers the residence of his sister in the city of Gijon, on the Atlantic coast, at the foot of the Asturian Mountains. It was a formidable fortress, chosen by Taric as a military post, to control the seaboard, and hold in check the Christian patriots who had taken refuge in the neighboring mountains. The commander of this redoubtable fortress was a renagado chief, who has been variously named by historians, and who held the sister of Pelayo a captive; though others affirm that she had submitted to become his wife, to avoid a more degrading fate. According to the old chronicle already cited, Pelayo succeeded by artifice in extricating her from his hands, and bearing her away to the mountains. They were hotly pursued, but Pelayo struck up a steep and rugged defile, where scarcely two persons could pass abreast, and partly by his knowledge of the defiles, partly by hurling down great masses of rock to check his pur-

suers, effected the escape of his sister and himself to a secure part of the mountains. Here they found themselves in a small green meadow, blocked up by a perpendicular precipice, whence fell a stream of water with great noise into a natural basin or pool, the source of the river Deva. Here was the hermitage of one of those holy men who had accompanied the Archbishop Urbano in his flight from Toledo, and had established a sanctuary among these mountains. He received the illustrious fugitives with joy, especially when he knew their rank and story, and conducted them to his retreat. A kind of ladder led up to an aperture in the face of the rock, about two pike lengths from the ground. Within was a lofty cavern capable of containing many people, with an inner cavern of still greater magnitude. The outer cavern served as a chapel, having an altar, a crucifix, and an image of the blessed Mary.

This wild retreat had never been molested; not a Moslem turban had been seen within the little valley. The cavern was well known to the Gothic inhabitants of the mountains and the adjacent valleys. They called it the cave of Santa Maria; but it is more commonly known to fame by the name of Covadonga. It had many times been a secure place of refuge

to suffering Christians, being unknown to their foes, and capable of being made a natural citadel. The entrance was so far from the ground that, when the ladder was removed, a handful of men could defend it from all assault. The small meadow in front afforded pasturage and space for gardens; and the stream that fell from the rock was from a never-failing spring. The valley was high in the mountains; so high that the crow seldom winged its flight across it, and the passes leading to it were so steep and dangerous that single men might set whole armies at defiance.

Such was one of the wild fastnesses of the Asturias, which formed the forlorn hope of unhappy Spain. The anchorite, too, was one of those religious men permitted by the conquerors, from their apparently peaceful and inoffensive lives to inhabit lonely chapels and hermitages, but whose cells formed places of secret resort and counsel for the patriots of Spain, and who kept up an intercourse and understanding among the scattered remnants of the nation. The holy man knew all the Christians of the Asturias, whether living in the almost inaccessible caves and dens of the cliffs, or in the narrow valleys imbedded among the mountains. He represented them to Pelayo as brave and hardy, and ready for any desperate enterprise

that might promise deliverance; but they were disheartened by the continued subjection of their country, and on the point, many of them, of descending into the plains and submitting, like the rest of their countrymen, to the yoke of the conquerors.

When Pelayo considered all these things, he was persuaded the time was come for effecting the great purpose of his soul. "Father," said he, "I will no longer play the fugitive, nor endure the disgrace of my country and my line. Here in this wilderness will I rear once more the royal standard of the Goths, and attempt, with the blessing of God, to shake off the yoke of the invader."

The hermit hailed his words with transport, as prognostics of the deliverance of Spain. Taking staff in hand, he repaired to the nearest valley inhabited by Christian fugitives. "Hasten in every direction," said he, "and proclaim far and wide among the mountains that Pelayo, a descendant of the Gothic kings, has unfurled his banner at Covadonga as a rallying-point for his countrymen."

The glad tidings ran like wildfire throughout all the regions of the Asturias. Old and young started up at the sound, and seized whatever weapons were at hand. From mountain cleft and secret glen issued forth stark and stalwart

warriors, grim with hardship, and armed with old Gothic weapons that had rusted in caves since the battle of the Guadalete. Others turned their rustic implements into spears and battle-axes, and hastened to join the standard of Pelayo. Every day beheld numbers of patriot warriors arriving in the narrow valley, or rather glen, of Covadonga, clad in all the various garbs of ancient Spain,—for here were fugitives from every province, who had preferred liberty among the sterile rocks of the mountains to ease and slavery in the plains. In a little while Pelayo found himself at the head of a formidable force, hardened by toil and suffering, fired with old Spanish pride, and rendered desperate by despair. With these he maintained a warlike sway among the mountains. Did any infidel troops attempt to penetrate to their stronghold, the signal fires blazed from height to height, the steep passes and defiles bristled with armed men, and rocks were hurled upon the heads of the intruders.

By degrees the forces of Pelayo increased so much in number, and in courage of heart, that he sallied forth occasionally from the mountains, swept the sea-coast, assailed the Moors in their towns and villages, put many of them to the sword, and returned laden with spoil to the mountains.

His name now became the terror of the infidels, and the hope and consolation of the Christians. The heart of old Gothic Spain was once more lifted up, and hailed his standard as the harbinger of happier days. Her scattered sons felt again as a people, and the spirit of empire arose once more among them. Gathering together from all parts of the Asturias in the Valley of Cangas, they resolved to elect their champion their sovereign. Placing the feet of Pelayo upon a shield, several of the starkest warriors raised him aloft, according to ancient Gothic ceremonial, and presented him as king. The multitude rent the air with their transports, and the mountain cliffs, which so long had echoed nothing but lamentations, now resounded with shouts of joy.* Thus terminated the interregnum of Christian Spain, which had lasted since the overthrow of King Roderick and his host on the banks of the Guadalete, and the new king continued with augmented zeal his victorious expeditions against the infidels.

*Morales, *Cronicon de España*, l. xiii., c. 2.

Chapter V.

The Battle of Covadonga.

TIDINGS soon spread throughout Spain that the Christians of the Asturias were in arms and had proclaimed a king among the mountains. The veteran chief, Taric el Tuerto, was alarmed for the safety of the seaboard, and dreaded lest this insurrection should extend into the plains. He despatched, therefore, in all haste, a powerful force from Cordova, under the command of Ibrahim Alcamar, one of his most experienced captains, with orders to penetrate the mountains and crush this dangerous rebellion. The perfidious Bishop Oppas, who had promoted the perdition of Spain, was sent with this host, in the hope that through his artful eloquence Pelayo might be induced to lay down his arms and his newly assumed sceptre.

The army made rapid marches, and in a few days arrived among the narrow valleys of the

Asturias. The Christians had received notice of their approach, and fled to their fastnesses. The Moors found the valleys silent and deserted; there were traces of men, but not a man was to be seen. They passed through the most wild and dreary defiles, among impending rocks—here and there varied by small green strips of mountain meadow—and directed their march for the lofty valley, or rather glen, of Covadonga, whither they learnt from their scouts that Pelayo had retired.

The newly elected king, when he heard of the approach of this mighty force, sent his sister, and all the women and children, to a distant and secret part of the mountain. He then chose a thousand of his best armed and most powerful men, and placed them within the cave. The lighter armed and less vigorous he ordered to climb to the summit of the impending rocks, and conceal themselves among the thickets with which they were crowned. This done, he entered the cavern and caused the ladder leading to it to be drawn up.

In a little while the bray of distant trumpets, and the din of atabals resounded up the glen, and soon the whole gorge of the mountain glistened with armed men; squadron after squadron of swarthy Arabs spurred into the valley, which was soon whitened by their tents. The veteran

Ibrahim Alcamir, trusting that he had struck dismay into the Christians by this powerful display, sent the crafty Bishop Oppas to parley with Pelayo, and persuade him to surrender.

The bishop advanced on his steed until within a short distance of the cave, and Pelayo appeared at its entrance with lance in hand. The silver-tongued prelate urged him to submit to the Moslem power, assuring him that he would be rewarded with great honors and estates. He represented the mildness of the conquerors to all who submitted to their sway, and the hopelessness of resistance. "Remember," said he, "how mighty was the power of the Goths, who vanquished both Romans and Barbarians, yet how completely was it broken down and annihilated by these people. If the whole nation in arms could not stand before them, what canst thou do with thy wretched cavern and thy handful of mountaineers? Be counselled then, Pelayo; give up this desperate attempt; accept the liberal terms offered thee; abandon these sterile mountains, and return to the plains to live in wealth and honor under the magnanimous rule of Taric."

Pelayo listened to the hoary traitor with mingled impatience and disdain. "Perdition has come upon Spain," replied he, "through the degeneracy of her sons, the sins of her

rulers,—like the wicked King Witiza thy brother,—and the treachery of base men like thee. But when punishment is at an end, mercy and forgiveness succeed. The Goths have reached the lowest extreme of misery ; it is for me to aid their fortune in the turn, and soon I trust will it arise to its former grandeur. As to thee, Don Oppas, thou shalt stand abhorred among men, false to thy country, traitorous to thy king, a renegado Christian, and an apostate priest."

So saying he turned his back upon the bishop and retired into his cave.

Oppas returned pale with shame and malice to Alcamar. "These people," said he, "are stiff-necked in their rebellion ; their punishment should be according to their obstinacy, and should serve as a terror to evil-doers ; not one of them should be permitted to survive."

Upon this Alcamar ordered a grand assault upon the cavern ; and the slingers and the cross-bow men advanced in great force, and with a din of atabals and trumpets that threatened to rend the very rocks. They discharged showers of stones and arrows at the mouth of the cavern, but their missiles rebounded from the face of the rock, and many of them fell upon their own heads. This is recorded as a miracle by pious chroniclers of yore, who affirm

that the stones and arrows absolutely turned in the air and killed those who had discharged them.

When Alcamar and Oppas saw that the attack was ineffectual, they brought up fresh forces and made preparations to scale the mouth of the cavern. At this moment, says the old chronicle, a banner was put in the hand of Pelayo, bearing a white cross on a blood-red field, and inscribed on it in Chaldean characters was the name of Jesus. And a voice spake unto him and said, "Arouse thy strength; go forth in the name of Jesus Christ, and thou shalt conquer." Who gave the banner and uttered the words has never been known; the whole, therefore, stands recorded as a miracle.

Then Pelayo elevated the banner. "Behold," said he, "a sign from Heaven,—a sacred cross sent to lead us on to victory."

Upon this the people gave a great shout of joy; and when the Saracens heard that shout within the entrails of the mountain their hearts quaked, for it was like the roar of a volcano giving token of an eruption.

Before they could recover from their astonishment, the Christians issued in a torrent from the cave, all fired with rage and holy confidence. By their impetuous assault they bore back the

first rank of their adversaries and forced it upon those behind, and as there was no space in that narrow valley to display a front of war or for many to fight at a time, the numbers of the foe but caused their confusion. The horse trampled on the foot, and the late formidable host became a mere struggling and distracted multitude. In the front was carnage and confusion, in the rear, terror and fright; wherever the sacred standard was borne, the infidels appeared to fall before it, as if smitten by some invisible hand rather than by the Christian band.

Early in the fight Pelayo encountered Ibrahim Alcamar. They fought hand to hand on the border of the pool from which springs the river Deva, and the Saracen was slain upon the margin of that pool, and his blood mingled with its waters.

When the Bishop Oppas beheld this he would have fled, but the valley was closed up by the mass of combatants, and Pelayo overtook him and defied him to the fight. But the bishop, though armed, was as craven as he was false, and yielding up his weapons implored for mercy. So Pelayo spared his life, but sent him bound to the cavern.

The whole Moorish host now took to headlong flight. Some attempted to clamber to

the summit of the mountains, but they were assailed by the troop stationed there by Pelayo, who showered down darts and arrows and great masses of rock, making fearful havoc.

The great body of the army fled by the road leading along the ledge or shelf overhanging the deep ravine of the Deva; but as they crowded in one dense multitude upon the projecting precipice, the whole mass suddenly gave way, and horse and horseman, tree and rock, were precipitated in one tremendous ruin into the raging river. Thus perished a great part of the flying army. The venerable Bishop Sebastiano, who records this event with becoming awe, as another miracle wrought in favor of the Christians, assures us that, in his time, many years afterwards, when during the winter season the Deva would swell and rage and tear away its banks, spears and scimetars and corselets, and the mingled bones of men and steeds, would be uncovered, being the wrecks and relics of the Moslem host, thus marvellously destroyed.*

* Judicio Domini actum est, ut ipsius montis pars se a fundamentis envolvens, sexaginta tria millia caldeorum stupenter in fulmina projecit, atque eos omnes opressit. Ubi usque nunc ipse fluvius dum tempore hyemali alveum suum implet, ripasque dissoluit, signa armorum et ossa eorum evidentissime ostendit.—*Sebastianus Salmanticensis Episc.*

NOTE.—To satisfy all doubts with respect to the miraculous banner of Pelayo, that precious relic is still preserved in the sacred chamber of the church of Oviedo, richly ornamented with gold and precious stones. It was removed to that place by order of Alonzo the Third, from the church of Santa Cruz, near Cangas, which was erected by Favila, the son and successor of Pelayo, in memory of this victory.

Chapter VI.

Pelayo Becomes King of Leon—His Death.

WHEN Pelayo beheld his enemies thus scattered and destroyed, he saw that Heaven was on his side, and proceeded to follow up his victory. Rearing the sacred banner, he descended through the valleys of the Asturias, his army augmenting, like a mountain torrent, as it rolled along; for the Christians saw in the victory of Covadonga a miraculous interposition of Providence in behalf of ruined Spain, and hastened from all parts to join the standard of the deliverer.

Emboldened by numbers, and by the enthusiasm of his troops, Pelayo directed his march towards the fortress of Gijon. The renegado Magued, however, did not await his coming. His heart failed him on hearing of the defeat and death of Alcamar, the destruction of the Moslem army, and the augmenting force of the

Christians; and, abandoning his post, he marched towards Leon with the greatest part of his troops. Pelayo received intelligence of his movements, and advancing rapidly through the mountains, encountered him in the Valley of Ollalas. A bloody battle ensued on the banks of the river which flows through that valley. The sacred banner was again victorious; Magued was slain by the hand of Pelayo, and so great was the slaughter of his host, that for two days the river ran red with the blood of the Saracens.

From hence, Pelayo proceeded rapidly to Gijon, which he easily carried by assault. The capture of this important fortress gave him the command of the seaboard, and of the skirts of the mountains. While reposing himself after his victories, the Bishop Oppas was brought in chains before him, and the Christian troops called loudly for the death of that traitor and apostate. But Pelayo recollected that he had been a sacred dignitary of the Church, and regarded him as a scourge in the hand of Heaven for the punishment of Spain. He would not, therefore, suffer violent hands to be laid upon him, but contented himself with placing him where he could no longer work mischief. He accordingly ordered him to be confined in one of the towers of Gijon, with

nothing but bread and water for his subsistence. There he remained a prey to the workings of his conscience, which filled his prison with horrid spectres of those who had perished through his crimes. He heard wailings and execrations in the sea-breeze that howled round the tower, and in the roaring of the waves that beat against its foundations; and in a little while he was found dead in his dungeon, hideously distorted, as if he had died in agony and terror.*

The sacred banner that had been elevated at Covadonga never sank nor receded, but continued to be the beacon of deliverance to Spain. Pelayo went on from conquest to conquest, increasing and confirming his royal power. Having captured the city of Leon, he made it the capital of his kingdom, and took there the title of the King of Leon. He moreover adopted the device of the city for his arms—a blood-red lion rampant, in a silver field. This long continued to be the arms of Spain, until in after times the lion was quartered with the castle, the device of Burgos, capital of Old Castile.

We forbear to follow this patriot prince through the rest of his glorious career. Suf-

* *La Destruyction de España*, part iii.

fice it to say that he reigned long and prosperously; extending on all sides the triumphs of his arms; establishing on solid foundations the reviving empire of Christian Spain; and that, after a life of constant warfare, he died in peace in the city of Cangas, and lies buried with his queen, Gaudiosa, in the church of Santa Eulalia, near to that city.

Here ends the legend of Pelayo.

Abderahman

ABDERAHMAN.

Chapter I.

Of the Youthful Fortunes of Abderahman.

"BLESSED be God!" exclaims an Arabian historian; "in his hands alone is the destiny of princes. He overthrows the mighty, and humbles the haughty to the dust; and he raises up the persecuted and afflicted from the very depths of despair!"

The illustrious house of Omeya, one of the two lines descended from Mahomet, had swayed the sceptre at Damascus for nearly a century, when a rebellion broke out, headed by Abu al Abbas Safah, who aspired to the throne of the caliphs, as being descended from Abbas, the uncle of the prophet. The rebellion was successful. Meruan, the last caliph of the house

of Omeya, was defeated and slain. A general proscription of the Ommiades took place. Many of them fell in battle; many were treacherously slain in places where they had taken refuge; above seventy, most noble and distinguished, were murdered at a banquet to which they had been invited, and their dead bodies, covered with cloths, were made to serve as tables for the horrible festivity. Others were driven forth, forlorn and desolate wanderers in various parts of the earth, and pursued with relentless hatred; for it was the determination of the usurper that not one of the persecuted family should escape. Abu al Abbas took possession of three stately palaces, and delicious gardens, and founded the powerful dynasty of the Abbassides, which, for several centuries, maintained dominion in the East.

"Blessed be God!" again exclaims the Arabian historian; "it was written in his eternal decrees that, notwithstanding the fury of the Abbassides, the noble stock of Omeya should not be destroyed. One fruitful branch remained to flourish with glory and greatness in another land."

When the sanguinary proscription of the Ommiades took place, two young princes of that line, brothers, by the names of Solyman and Abderahman, were spared for a time.

Their personal graces, and noble demeanor, and winning affability, had made them many friends, while their extreme youth rendered them objects of but little dread to the usurper. Their safety, however, was but transient. In a little while the suspicions of Abu al Abbas were aroused. The unfortunate Solyman fell beneath the scimetar of the executioner. His brother Abderahman was warned of his danger in time. Several of his friends hastened to him, bringing him jewels, a disguise, and a fleet horse. "The emissaries of the Caliph," said they, "are in search of thee; thy brother lies weltering in his blood; fly to the desert! There is no safety for thee in the habitations of man!"

Abderahman took the jewels, clad himself in the disguise, and, mounting the steed, fled for his life. As he passed, a lonely fugitive, by the palaces of his ancestors, in which his family had long held sway, their very walls seemed disposed to betray him, as they echoed the swift clattering of his steed.

Abandoning his native country, Syria, where he was liable at each moment to be recognized and taken, he took refuge among the Bedouin Arabs, a half-savage race of shepherds. His youth, his inborn majesty and grace, and the sweetness and affability that

shone forth in his azure eyes, won the hearts of these wandering men. He was but twenty years of age, and had been reared in the soft luxury of a palace; but he was tall and vigorous, and in a little while hardened himself so completely to the rustic life of the fields, that it seemed as though he had passed all his days in the rude simplicity of a shepherd's cabin.

His enemies, however, were upon his traces, and gave him but little rest. By day he scoured the plains with the Bedouins, hearing in every blast the sound of pursuit, and fancying in every distant cloud of dust a troop of the Caliph's horsemen. His night was passed in broken sleep and frequent watchings, and at the earliest dawn he was the first to put the bridle to his steed.

Wearied by these perpetual alarms, he bade farewell to his friendly Bedouins, and leaving Egypt behind, sought a safer refuge in Western Africa. The province of Barca was at that time governed by Aben Habib, who had risen to rank and fortune under the fostering favor of the Ommiades. "Surely," thought the unhappy prince, "I shall receive kindness and protection from this man; he will rejoice to show his gratitude for the benefits showered upon him by my kindred."

Abderahman was young, and as yet knew

little of mankind. None are so hostile to the victim of power as those whom he has befriended. They fear being suspected of gratitude by his persecutors, and involved in his misfortunes.

The unfortunate Abderahman had halted for a few days to repose himself among a horde of Bedouins, who had received him with their characteristic hospitality. They would gather round him in the evenings to listen to his conversation, regarding with wonder this gently spoken stranger from the more refined country of Egypt. The old men marvelled to find so much knowledge and wisdom in such early youth, and the young men, won by his frank and manly carriage, entreated him to remain among them.

In the meantime the Wali Aben Habib, like all the governors of distant posts, had received orders from the Caliph to be on the watch for the fugitive prince. Hearing that a young man answering the description had entered the province alone, from the frontiers of Egypt, on a steed worn down by travel, he sent forth horsemen in his pursuit, with orders to bring him to him dead or alive. The emissaries of the wali traced him to his resting-place, and coming upon the encampment in the dead of the night, demanded of the Arabs whether a

young man, a stranger from Syria, did not sojourn among their tribe. The Bedouins knew by the description that the stranger must be their guest, and feared some evil was intended him. "Such a youth," said they, "has indeed sojourned among us; but he has gone, with some of our young men, to a distant valley to hunt the lion. The emissaries inquired the way to the place, and hastened on to surprise their expected prey.

The Bedouins repaired to Abderahman, who was still sleeping. "If thou hast aught to fear from man in power," said they, "arise and fly; for the horsemen of the wali are in quest of thee! We have sent them off for a time on a wrong errand, but they will soon return."

"Alas! whither shall I fly?" cried the unhappy prince; "my enemies hunt me like the ostrich of the desert. They follow me like the wind, and allow me neither safety nor repose!"

Six of the bravest youths of the tribe stepped forward.

"We have steeds," said they, "that can outstrip the wind, and hands that can hurl the javelin. We will accompany thee in thy flight, and will fight by thy side while life lasts and we have weapons to wield."

Abderahman embraced them with tears of

gratitude. They mounted their steeds, and made for the most lonely parts of the desert. By the faint light of the stars, they passed through dreary wastes, and over hills of sand. The lion roared and the hyena howled unheeded, for they flew from man, more cruel and relentless, when in pursuit of blood, than the savage beasts of the desert.

At sunrise they paused to refresh themselves beside a scanty well, surrounded by a few palm-trees. One of the young Arabs climbed a tree, and looked in every direction, but not a horseman was to be seen.

"We have outstripped pursuit," said the Bedouins; "whither shall we conduct thee? Where is thy home, and the land of thy people?"

"Home have I none!" replied Abderahman, mournfully, "nor family, nor kindred! My native land is to me a land of destruction, and my people seek my life!"

The hearts of the youthful Bedouins were touched with compassion at these words, and they marvelled that one so young and gentle should have suffered such great sorrow and persecution.

Abderahman set by the well and mused for a time. At length, breaking silence, "In the midst of Mauritania," said he, "dwells the

tribe of Zeneta. My mother was of that tribe; and perhaps when her son presents himself, a persecuted wanderer at their door, they will not turn him from the threshold."

"The Zenetes," replied the Bedouins, "are among the bravest and most hospitable of the people of Africa. Never did the unfortunate seek refuge among them in vain, nor was the stranger repulsed from their door." So they mounted their steeds with renewed spirits, and journeyed with all speed to Tahart, the capital of the Zenetes.

When Abderahman entered the place, followed by his six rustic Arabs, all way-worn and travel-stained, his noble and majestic demeanor shone through the simple garb of a Bedouin. A crowd gathered around him as he alighted from his weary steed. Confiding in the well-known character of the tribe, he no longer attempted concealment.

"You behold before you," said he, "one of the proscribed house of Omeya. I am that Abderahman upon whose head a price has been set, and who has been driven from land to land. I come to you as my kindred. My mother was of your tribe, and she told me with her dying breath that in all time of need I would find a home and friends among the Zenetes."

The words of Abderahman went straight to the hearts of his hearers. They pitied his youth and his great misfortunes, while they were charmed by his frankness, and by the manly graces of his person. The tribe was of a bold and generous spirit, and not to be awed by the frown of power. "Evil be upon us and upon our children," said they, "if we deceive the trust thou hast placed in us!"

One of the noblest, Xeques, then took Abderahman to his house, and treated him as his own child; and the principal people of the tribe strove who most should cherish him and do him honor—endeavoring to obliterate by their kindness the recollection of his past misfortunes.

Abderahman had resided some time among the hospitable Zenetes, when one day two strangers of venerable appearance, attended by a small retinue, arrived at Tahart. They gave themselves out as merchants, and from the simple style in which they travelled, excited no attention. In a little while they sought out Abderahman, and, taking him apart, "Hearken," said they, "Abderahman, of the royal line of Omeya. We are ambassadors, sent on the part of the principal Moslems of Spain, to offer thee, not merely an asylum, for that thou hast already among these brave

Zenetes, but an empire! Spain is a prey to distracting factions, and can no longer exist as a dependence upon a throne too remote to watch over its welfare. It needs to be independent of Asia and Africa, and to be under the government of a good prince, who shall reside within it and devote himself entirely to its prosperity; a prince with sufficient title to silence all rival claims and bring the warring parties into unity and peace; and, at the same time, with sufficient ability and virtue to insure the welfare of his dominions. For this purpose the eyes of all the honorable leaders in Spain have been turned to thee as a descendant of the royal line of Omeya, and an offset from the same stock as our holy prophet. They have heard of thy virtues, and of thy admirable constancy under misfortunes; and invite thee to accept the sovereignty of one of the noblest countries in the world. Thou wilt have some difficulties to encounter from hostile men; but thou wilt have on thy side the bravest captains that have signalized themselves in the conquest of the unbelievers."

The ambassadors ceased, and Abderahman remained for a time lost in wonder and admiration. "God is great!" exclaimed he, at length; "there is but one God, who is God, and Mahomet is his prophet! Illustrious am-

bassadors, you have put new life into my soul, for you have shown me something to live for. In the few years that I have lived, troubles and sorrows have been heaped upon my head, and I have become inured to hardships and alarms. Since it is the wish of the valiant Moslems of Spain, I am willing to become their leader and defender, and devote myself to their cause, be it happy or disastrous."

The ambassadors now cautioned him to be silent as to their errand, and to depart secretly for Spain. "The seaboard of Africa," said they, "swarms with your enemies, and a powerful faction in Spain would intercept you on landing, did they know your name and rank, and the object of your coming."

But Abderahman replied: "I have been cherished in adversity by these brave Zenetes; I have been protected and honored by them when a price was set upon my head, and to harbor me was great peril. How can I keep my good fortune from my benefactors, and desert their hospitable roofs in silence? He is unworthy of friendship who withholds confidence from his friend."

Charmed with the generosity of his feelings, the ambassadors made no opposition to his wishes. The Zenetes proved themselves worthy of his confidence. They hailed with joy the

great change in his fortunes. The warriors and the young men pressed forward to follow and aid him with horse and weapon; "for the honor of a noble house and family," said they, "can be maintained only by lances and horsemen." In a few days he set forth with the ambassadors, at the head of nearly a thousand horsemen, skilled in war, and exercised in the desert, and a large body of infantry, armed with lances. The venerable Xeques, with whom he had resided, blessed him, and shed tears over him at parting, as though he had been his own child; and when the youth passed over the threshold, the house was filled with lamentations.

Chapter II.

Landing of Abderahman in Spain—Condition of the Country.

ABDERAHMAN BEN OMEYA arrived in safety on the coast of Andalusia and landed at Almunecar, or Malaga, with his little band of warlike Zenetes. Spain was at that time in great confusion. Upwards of forty years had elapsed since the Conquest. The civil wars in Syria and Egypt, and occasional revolts in Africa, had caused frequent overflowings of different tribes into Spain, which was a place of common refuge. Hither, too, came the fragments of defeated armies, desperate in fortune, with weapons in their hands. These settled themselves in various parts of the peninsula, which thus became divided between the Arabs of Yemen, the Egyptians, the Syrians, and the Alabdarides. The distractions in its Eastern and African provinces prevented the main gov-

ernment at Damascus from exercising any control over its distant and recently acquired territory in Spain, which soon became broken up into factions and a scene of all kinds of abuses. Every sheik and wali considered the town or province committed to his charge an absolute property, and practiced the most arbitrary extortions. These excesses at length became insupportable, and at a convocation of the principal leaders it was determined, as a means of ending these dissensions, to unite all the Moslem provinces of the peninsula under one emir, or general governor. Yusuf el Fehri, an ancient man of honorable lineage, being of the tribe of Koreish, and a descendant of Ocba, the conqueror of Africa, was chosen for this station. He began his reign with policy, and endeavored to conciliate all parties. At the head of the Egyptian faction was a veteran warrior, named Samael, to whom Yusuf gave the government of Toledo, and to his son that of Saragossa. At the head of the Alabdarides was Amer ben Amru, Emir of the Seas; his office being suppressed, Yusuf gave him in place thereof the government of the noble city of Seville. Thus he proceeded, distributing honors and commands, and flattered himself that he secured the loyalty and good-will of every one whom he benefited.

Who shall pretend, says the Arabian sage, to content the human heart by benefits, when even the bounties of Allah are ineffectual? In seeking to befriend all parties, Yusuf created for himself inveterate enemies. Amer ben Amru, powerful from his wealth and connections, and proud of his descent from Mosab, the standard-bearer of the Prophet in the battle of Beder, was indignant that Samael and his son, with whom he was at deadly feud, should be appointed to such important commands. He demanded one of those posts for himself, and was refused. An insurrection and a civil war was the consequence: and the country was laid waste with fire and sword. The inhabitants of the villages fled to the cities for refuge; flourishing towns disappeared from the face of the earth, or were reduced to heaps of rubbish.

In these dismal times, says the Arabian chroniclers, the very heavens gave omens of the distress and desolation of the earth. At Cordova two pale and livid suns were seen shedding a baleful light. In the north appeared a flaming scythe, and the heavens were red as blood. These were regarded as presages of direful calamities and bloody wars.

At the time of the landing of Abderahman in Spain, Yusuf had captured Saragossa, in

which was Amer ben Amru, with his son and secretary, and loading them with chains and putting them on camels, he set out on his return to Cordova. He had halted one day in a valley called Wadaramla, and was reposing with his family in his tent, while his people and the prisoners made a repast in the open air. The heart of the old emir was lifted up, for he thought there was no one to dispute with him the domination of Spain. In the midst of his exultation some horsemen were seen spurring up the valley, bearing the standard of the Wali Samael.

That officer arrived covered with dust and exhausted with fatigue. He brought tidings of the arrival of Abderahman, and that the whole seaboard was flocking to his standard. Messenger after messenger arrived confirming the fearful tidings, and adding that this descendant of the Omeyas had been secretly invited to Spain by Amru and his party.

Yusuf waited not to ascertain the truth of this accusation. In a transport of fury he ordered that Amru, his son, and secretary should be cut to pieces. His orders were instantly executed; and this cruelty, adds the Arabian chronicler, lost him the favor of Allah; for from that time success deserted his standard.

Chapter III.

Triumphs of Abderahman—The Palm-tree which he Planted, and the Verses he Composed thereupon—Insurrections—His Enemies Subdued—Undisputed Sovereign of the Moslems of Spain—Begins the Famous Mosque in Cordova—His death.

ABDERAHMAN had indeed been hailed with joy on his landing. The old people hoped to find tranquillity under the sway of one supreme chieftain, descended from their ancient caliphs; the young men were rejoiced to have a youthful warrior to lead them on to victories; and the populace charmed with his freshness and manly beauty, his majestic yet gracious and affable demeanor, shouted, "Long live Abderahman, Miramamolin of Spain!"

In a few days the youthful sovereign saw himself at the head of more than twenty thousand men, from the neighborhood of Elvira, Almeria, Malaga, Xeres, and Sidonia.

Fair Seville threw open its gates at his approach, and celebrated his arrival with public rejoicings. He continued his march into the country, vanquished one of the sons of Yusuf before the gates of Cordova, and obliged him to take refuge within its walls, where he held him in close siege. Hearing, however, of the approach of Yusuf, the father, with a powerful army, he divided his forces, and leaving ten thousand men to press the siege, he hastened with the other ten to meet the coming foe.

Yusuf had indeed mustered a formidable force, from the east and south of Spain, and accompanied by his veteran general, Samael, came with confident boasting to drive this intruder from the land. His confidence increased on beholding the small army of Abderahman. Turning to Samael, he repeated, with a scornful sneer, a verse from an Arabian poetess, which says:

"How hard is our lot! We come, a thirsty multitude, and lo! but this cup of water to share among us!"

There was indeed a fearful odds. On the one side were two veteran generals, grown gray in victory, with a mighty host of warriors, seasoned in the wars of Spain. On the other side was a mere youth, scarce attained to

manhood, with a hasty levy of half-disciplined troops; but the youth was a prince, flushed with hope, and aspiring after fame and empire, and surrounded by a devoted band of warriors from Africa, whose example infused zeal into the little army.

The encounter took place at daybreak. The impetuous valor of the Zenetes carried everything before it. The cavalry of Yusuf was broken and driven back upon the infantry, and before noon the whole host was put to headlong flight. Yusuf and Samael were borne along in the torrent of the fugitives, raging and storming, and making ineffectual efforts to rally them. They were separated widely in the confusion of the flight, one taking refuge in the Algarves, the other in the kingdom of Murcia. They afterward rallied, reunited their forces, and made another desperate stand near to Almunecar. The battle was obstinate and bloody, but they were again defeated, and driven, with a handful of followers, to take refuge in the rugged mountains adjacent to Elvira.

The spirit of the veteran Samael gave way before these fearful reverses. "In vain, O Yusuf!" said he, "do we contend with the prosperous star of this youthful conqueror; the will of Allah be done! Let us submit to

our fate, and sue for favorable terms while we have yet the means of capitulation."

It was a hard trial for the proud spirit of Yusuf, that had once aspired to uncontrolled sway; but he was compelled to capitulate. Abderahman was as generous as brave. He granted the two gray-headed generals the most honorable conditions, and even took the veteran Samael into favor, employing him, as a mark of confidence, to visit the eastern provinces of Spain, and restore them to tranquillity. Yusuf, having delivered up Elvira and Granada, and complied with other articles of his capitulation, was permitted to retire to Murcia, and rejoin his son Muhamad. A general amnesty to all chiefs and soldiers who should yield up their strongholds and lay down their arms completed the triumph of Abderahman, and brought all hearts into obedience. Thus terminated this severe struggle for the domination of Spain; and thus the illustrious family of Omeya, after having been cast down and almost exterminated in the East, took new root, and sprang forth prosperously in the West.

Wherever Abderahman appeared, he was received with rapturous acclamations. As he rode through the cities, the populace rent the air with shouts of joy; the stately palaces

were crowded with spectators, eager to gain a sight of his graceful form and beaming countenance; and when they beheld the mingled majesty and benignity of their new monarch, and the sweetness and gentleness of his whole conduct, they extolled him as something more than mortal,—as a beneficent genius, sent for the happiness of Spain.

In the interval of peace which now succeeded, Abderahman occupied himself in promoting the useful and elegant arts, and in introducing into Spain the refinements of the East. Considering the building and ornamenting of cities as among the noblest employments of the tranquil hours of princes, he bestowed great pains upon beautifying the city of Cordova and its environs. He reconstructed banks and dykes to keep the Guadalquivir from overflowing its borders, and on the vast terraces thus formed he planted delightful gardens. In the midst of these he erected a lofty tower, commanding a view of the vast and fruitful valley, enlivened by the windings of the river. In this tower would he pass hours of meditation, gazing on the soft and varied landscape, and inhaling the bland and balmy airs of that delightful region. At such times his thoughts would recur to the past, and the misfortunes of his youth;

the massacre of his family would rise to view, mingled with tender recollections of his native country, from which he was exiled. In these melancholy musings, he would sit with his eyes fixed upon a palm-tree which he had planted in the midst of his garden. It is said to have been the first ever planted in Spain, and to have been the parent stock of all the palm-trees which grace the southern provinces of the peninsula. The heart of Abderahman yearned toward this tree; it was the offspring of his native country, and like him an exile. In one of his moods of tenderness he composed verses upon it, which have since become famous throughout the world. The following is a rude, but literal translation:

"Beauteous palm! thou also wert hither brought a stranger; but thy roots have found a kindly soil, thy head is lifted to the skies, and the sweet airs of Algarve fondle and kiss thy branches.

"Thou hast known, like me, the storms of adverse fortune. Bitter tears wouldst thou shed, couldst thou feel my woes. Repeated griefs have overwhelmed me. With early tears I bedewed the palms on the banks of the Euphrates; but neither tree nor river heeded my sorrows, when driven by cruel fate and the ferocious Abu al Abbas, from the

scenes of my childhood and the sweet objects of my affection.

"To thee no remembrance remains of my beloved country; I, unhappy! can never recall it without tears!"

The generosity of Abderahman to his vanquished foe was destined to be abused. The veteran Yusuf, in visiting certain of the cities which he had surrendered, found himself surrounded by zealous partisans, ready to peril life in his service. The love of command revived in his bosom, and he repented the facility with which he had suffered himself to be persuaded to submission. Flushed with new hopes of success, he caused arms to be secretly collected and deposited in various villages, most zealous in their professions of devotion, and raising a considerable body of troops, seized upon the castle of Almodovar. The rash rebellion was short-lived. At the first appearance of an army sent by Abderahman, and commanded by Abdelmelee, governor of Seville, the villages which had so recently professed loyalty to Yusuf hastened to declare their attachment to the monarch, and to give up the concealed arms. Almodovar was soon retaken, and Yusuf, driven to the environs of Lorea, was surrounded by the cavalry of Abdelmelee. The veteran endeav-

ored to cut a passage through the enemy, but after fighting with desperate fury, and with a force of arm incredible in one of his age, he fell beneath blows from weapons of all kinds, so that after the battle his body could scarcely be recognized, so numerous were the wounds. His head was cut off and sent to Cordova, where it was placed in an iron cage, over the gate of the city.

The old lion was dead, but his whelps survived. Yusuf had left three sons, who inherited his warlike spirit, and were eager to revenge his death. Collecting a number of the scattered adherents of their house, they surprised and seized upon Toledo during the absence of Temam, its wali or commander. In this old warrior city, built upon a rock, and almost surrounded by the Tagus, they set up a kind of robber hold, scouring the surrounding country, levying tribute, seizing upon horses, and compelling the peasantry to join their standard. Every day cavalcades of horses and mules, laden with spoil, with flocks of sheep and droves of cattle, came pouring over the bridges on either side of the city, and thronging in at the gates,—the plunder of the surrounding country. Those of the inhabitants who were still loyal to Abderahman dared not lift up their voices, for men

of the sword bore sway. At length one day, when the sons of Yusuf, with their choicest troops, were out on a maraud, the watchmen on the towers gave the alarm. A troop of scattered horsemen were spurring wildly toward the gates. The banners of the sons of Yusuf were descried. Two of them spurred into the city, followed by a handful of warriors, covered with confusion and dismay. They had been encountered and defeated by the Wali Temam, and one of the brothers had been slain.

The gates were secured in all haste, and the walls were scarcely manned when Temam appeared before them with his troops, and summoned the city to surrender. A great internal commotion ensued between the loyalists and the insurgents; the latter, however, had weapons in their hands, and prevailed; and for several days, trusting to the strength of their rock-built fortress, they set the wali at defiance. At length some of the loyal inhabitants of Toledo, who knew all its secret and subterraneous passages, some of which, if chroniclers may be believed, have existed since the days of Hercules, if not of Tubal Cain, introduced Temam, and a chosen band of his warriors, into the very centre of the city, where they suddenly appeared as if by magic. A

panic seized upon the insurgents. Some sought safety in submission, some in concealment, some in flight. Casim, one of the sons of Yusuf, escaped in disguise; the youngest, unharmed, was taken, and was sent captive to the king, accompanied by the head of his brother, who had been slain in battle.

When Abderaham beheld the youth laden with chains, he remembered his own sufferings in his early days, and had compassion on him; but, to prevent him from doing further mischief, he imprisoned him in a tower of the wall of Cordova.

In the meantime, Casim, who had escaped, managed to raise another band of warriors. Spain, in all ages a guerilla country, prone to partisan warfare and petty maraud, was at that time infested by bands of licentious troops, who had sprung up in the civil contests; their only object pillage, their only dependence the sword, and ready to flock to any new and desperate standard that promised the greatest license. With a ruffian force thus levied, Casim scoured the country, took Sidonia by storm, and surprised Seville while in a state of unsuspecting security.

Abderahman put himself at the head of his faithful Zenetes, and took the field in person. By the rapidity of his movements the rebels

were defeated, Sidonia and Seville speedily retaken, and Casim was made prisoner. The generosity of Abderahman was again exhibited toward this unfortunate son of Yusuf. He spared his life, and sent him to be confined in a tower at Toledo.

The veteran Samael had taken no part in these insurrections, but had attended faithfully to the affairs intrusted to him by Abderahman. The death of his old friend and colleague, Yusuf, however, and the subsequent disasters of his family, filled him with despondency. Fearing the inconstancy of fortune, and the dangers incident to public employ, he entreated the king to be permitted to retire to his house in Seguenza, and indulge a privacy and repose suited to his advanced age. His prayer was granted. The veteran laid by his arms, battered in a thousand conflicts; hung his sword and lance against the wall, and, surrounded by a few friends, gave himself up apparently to the sweets of quiet and unambitious leisure.

Who can count, however, upon the tranquil content of a heart nurtured amid the storms of war and ambition? Under the ashes of this outward humility were glowing the coals of faction. In his seemingly philosophical retirement, Samael was concerting with his friends new treason against Abderahman. His plot

was discovered; his house was suddenly surrounded by troops; and he was conveyed to a tower at Toledo, where, in the course of a few months, he died in captivity.

The magnanimity of Abderahman was again put to the proof by a new insurrection at Toledo. Hixem ben Adra, a relation of Yusuf, seized upon the alcazar, or citadel, slew several of the royal adherents of the king, liberated Casim from his tower, and, summoning all the banditti of the country, soon mustered a force of ten thousand men. Abderahman was quickly before the walls of Toledo, with the troops of Cordova and his devoted Zenetes. The rebels were brought to terms, and surrendered the city on promise of general pardon, which was extended even to Hixem and Casim. When the chieftains saw Hixem and his principal confederates in the power of Abderahman, they advised him to put them all to death. "A promise given to traitors and rebels," said they, "is not binding when it is to the interest of the state that it should be broken."

"No!" replied Abderahman, "if the safety of my throne were at stake, I would not break my word." So saying, he confirmed the amnesty, and granted Hixem ben Adra a worthless life, to be employed in further treason.

Scarcely had Abderahman returned from

this expedition, when a powerful army, sent by the Caliph, landed from Africa on the coast of the Algarves. The commander, Aly ben Mogueth, Emir of Cairvan, elevated a rich banner which he had received from the hands of the Caliph. Wherever he went, he ordered the Caliph of the East to be proclaimed by sound of trumpet, denouncing Abderahman as a usurper, the vagrant member of a family proscribed and execrated in all the mosques of the East.

One of the first to join his standard was Hixem ben Adra, so recently pardoned by Abderahman. He seized upon the citadel of Toledo, and repairing to the camp of Aly, offered to deliver the city into his hands.

Abderahman, as bold in war as he was gentle in peace, took the field with his wonted promptness; overthrew his enemies with great slaughter; drove some to the sea-coast to regain their ships, and others to the mountains. The body of Aly was found on the field of battle. Abderahman caused the head to be struck off, and conveyed to Cairvan, where it was affixed at night to a column in the public square, with this inscription,—"Thus Abderahman, the descendant of the Omeyas, punishes the rash and arrogant."

Hixem ben Adra escaped from the field

of battle, and excited further troubles, but was eventually captured by Abdelmelee, who ordered his head to be struck off on the spot, lest he should again be spared through the wonted clemency of Abderahman.

Notwithstanding these signal triumphs, the reign of Abderahman was disturbed by further insurrections, and by another descent from Africa, but he was victorious over them all; striking the roots of his power deeper and deeper into the land. Under his sway, the government of Spain became more regular and consolidated, and acquired an independence of the empire of the East. The Caliph continued to be considered as first pontiff and chief of the religion, but he ceased to have any temporal power over Spain.

Having again an interval of peace, Abderahman devoted himself to the education of his children. Suleiman, the eldest, he appointed wali, or governor, of Toledo; Abdallah, the second, was intrusted with the command of Merida; but the third son, Hixem, was the delight of his heart, the son of Howara, his favorite sultana whom he loved throughout life with the utmost tenderness. With this youth, who was full of promise, he relaxed from the fatigues of government; joining in his youthful sports amidst the delightful gar-

dens of Cordova, and teaching him the gentle art of falconry, of which the king was so fond that he received the name of the Falcon of Coraixi.

While Abderahman was thus indulging in the gentle propensities of his nature, mischief was secretly at work. Muhamad, the youngest son of Yusuf, had been for many years a prisoner in the tower of Cordova. Being passive and resigned, his keepers relaxed their vigilance, and brought him forth from his dungeon. He went groping about, however, in broad daylight, as if still in the darkness of his tower. His guards watched him narrowly, lest this should be a deception, but were at length convinced that the long absence of light had rendered him blind. They now permitted him to descend frequently to the lower chambers of the tower, and to sleep there occasionally during the heats of summer. They even allowed him to grope his way to the cistern, in quest of water for his ablutions.

A year passed in this way, without anything to excite suspicion. During all this time, however, the blindness of Muhamad was entirely a deception; and he was concerting a plan of escape, through the aid of some friends of his father, who found means to visit him occasionally. One sultry evening in midsummer the

guards had gone to bathe in the Guadalquivir, leaving Muhamad alone, in the lower chambers of the tower. No sooner were they out of sight and hearing, than he hastened to a window of the staircase, leading down to the cistern, lowered himself as far as his arms would reach, and dropped without injury to the ground. Plunging into the Guadalquivir, he swam across to a thick grove on the opposite side, where his friends were waiting to receive him. Here, mounting a horse which they had provided for an event of the kind, he fled across the country, by solitary roads, and made good his escape to the mountains of Jaen.

The guardians of the tower dreaded for some time to make known his flight to Abderahman. When at length it was told to him, he exclaimed,—"All is the work of eternal wisdom; it is intended to teach us that we cannot benefit the wicked without injuring the good. The flight of that blind man will cause much trouble and bloodshed."

His predictions were verified. Muhamad reared the standard of rebellion in the mountains; the seditious and discontented of all kinds hastened to join it, together with soldiers of fortune, or rather wandering banditti, and he had soon six thousand men, well armed, hardy in habits, and desperate in character.

His brother Casim also appeared about the same time, in the mountains of Ronda, at the head of a daring band, that laid all the neighboring valleys under contribution.

Abderahman summoned his alcaids from their various military posts, to assist in driving the rebels from their mountain fastnesses into the plains. It was a dangerous and protracted toil, for the mountains were frightfully wild and rugged. He entered them with a powerful host, driving the rebels from height to height, and valley to valley, and harassing them by a galling fire from thousands of cross-bows. At length a decisive battle took place near the river Guadalemar. The rebels were signally defeated; four thousand fell in action; many were drowned in the river, and Muhamad, with a few horsemen, escaped to the mountains of the Algarves. Here he was hunted by the alcaids from one desolate retreat to another; his few followers grew tired of sharing the disastrous fortunes of a fated man, one by one deserted him, and he himself deserted the remainder, fearing they might give him up to purchase their own pardon.

Lonely and disguised, he plunged into the depth of the forests, or lurked in dens and caverns like a famished wolf, often casting back his thoughts with regret to the time of

his captivity in the gloomy tower of Cordova. Hunger at length drove him to Alarcon, at the risk of being discovered. Famine and misery, however, had so wasted and changed him, that he was not recognized. He remained nearly a year in Alarcon, unnoticed and unknown, yet constantly tormenting himself with the dread of discovery, and with groundless fears of the vengeance of Abderahman. Death at length put an end to his wretchedness.

A milder fate attended his brother Casim. Being defeated in the mountains of Murcia, he was conducted in chains to Cordova. On coming into the presence of Abderahman, his once fierce and haughty spirit, broken by distress, gave way ; he threw himself on the earth, kissed the dust beneath the feet of the king, and implored his clemency. The benignant heart of Abderahman was filled with melancholy, rather than exultation, at beholding this wreck of the once haughty family of Yusuf a suppliant at his feet, and suing for mere exisence. He thought upon the mutability of Fortune, and felt how insecure are all her favors. He raised the unhappy Casim from the earth, ordered his irons to be be taken off, and, not content with mere forgiveness, treated him with honor, and gave him possessions in Seville, where he might live in state conform-

able to the ancient dignity of his family. Won by this great and persevering magnanimity, Casim ever after remained one of the most devoted of his subjects.

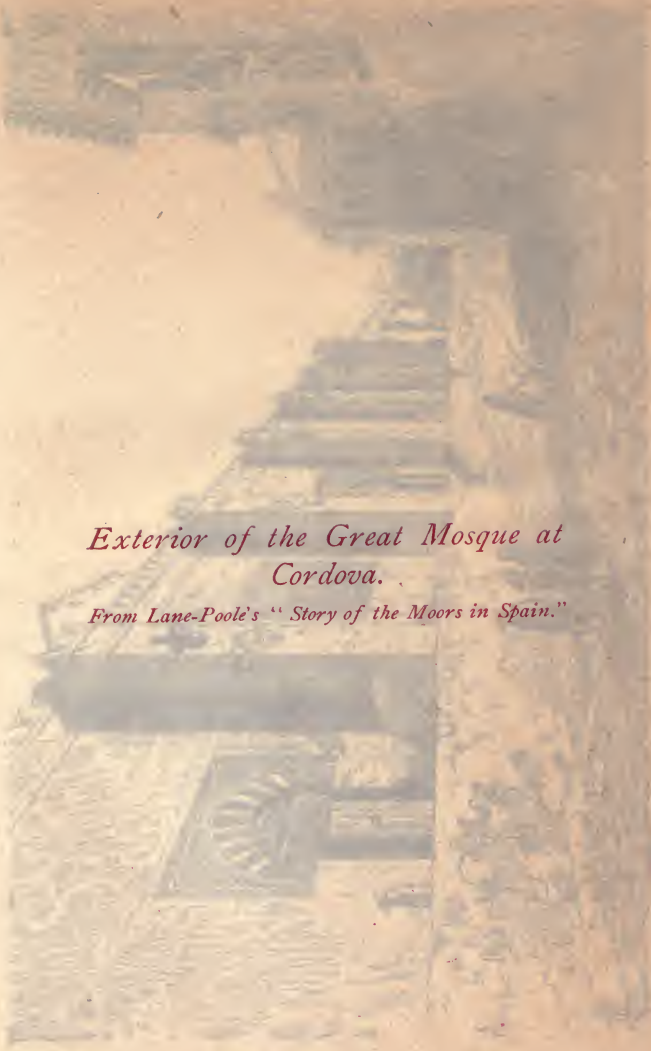
All the enemies of Abderahman were at length subdued; he reigned undisputed sovereign of the Moslems of Spain; and so benign was his government, that every one blessed the revival of the illustrious line of Omeya. He was at all times accessible to the humblest of his subjects; the poor man ever found in him a friend, and the oppressed a protector. He improved the administration of justice, established schools for public instruction, encouraged poets and men of letters, and cultivated the sciences. He built mosques in every city that he visited; inculcated religion by example as well as by precept; and celebrated all the festivals prescribed by the Koran with the utmost magnificence.

As a monument of gratitude to God for the prosperity with which he had been favored, he undertook to erect a mosque in his favorite city of Cordova that should rival in splendor the great mosque of Damascus, and excel the one recently erected in Bagdad by the Abassides, the supplanters of his family.

It is said that he himself furnished the plan for this famous edifice, and even worked on it,

with his own hands, one hour in each day, to testify his zeal and humility in the service of God, and to animate his workmen. He did not live to see it completed, but it was finished according to his plans by his son Hixem. When finished, it surpassed the most splendid mosques of the East. It was six hundred feet in length, and two hundred and fifty in breadth. Within were twenty-eight aisles, crossed by nineteen, supported by a thousand and ninety-three columns of marble. There were nineteen portals, covered with plates of bronze, of rare workmanship. The principal portal was covered with plates of gold. On the summit of the grand cupola were three gilt balls, surmounted by a golden pomegranate. At night the mosque was illuminated with four thousand seven hundred lamps, and great sums were expended in amber and aloes, which were burnt as perfumes. The mosque remains to this day shorn of its ancient splendor, yet still one of the grandest Moslem monuments in Spain.

Finding himself advancing in years, Abderahman assembled in his capital of Cordova the principal governors and commanders of his kingdom, and in presence of them all, with great solemnity, nominated his son Hixem as the successor to the throne. All present made



Exterior of the Great Mosque at Cordova.

From Lane-Poole's "Story of the Moors in Spain."

thy troops punctually; teach them to feel a certainty in thy promises; command them with gentleness but firmness, and make them in truth the defenders of the state, not its destroyers. Cultivate unceasingly the affections of thy people; for in their good-will consists the security of the state, in their distrust its peril, in their hatred its certain ruin. Protect the husbandmen, who cultivate the earth and yield us necessary sustenance; never permit their fields and groves and gardens to be disturbed. In a word, act in such wise that thy people may bless thee, and may enjoy, under the shadow of thy wing, a secure and tranquil life. In this consists good government; if thou dost practice it, thou wilt be happy among thy people, and renowned throughout the world."

Having given this excellent counsel, the good King Abderahman blessed his son Hixem, and shortly after died, being but in the sixtieth year of his age. He was interred with great pomp; but the highest honors that distinguished his funeral were the tears of real sorrow shed upon his grave. He left behind him a name for valor, justice, and magnanimity, and forever famous as being the founder of the glorious line of the Ommiades in Spain.

THE END OF VOLUME III.

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